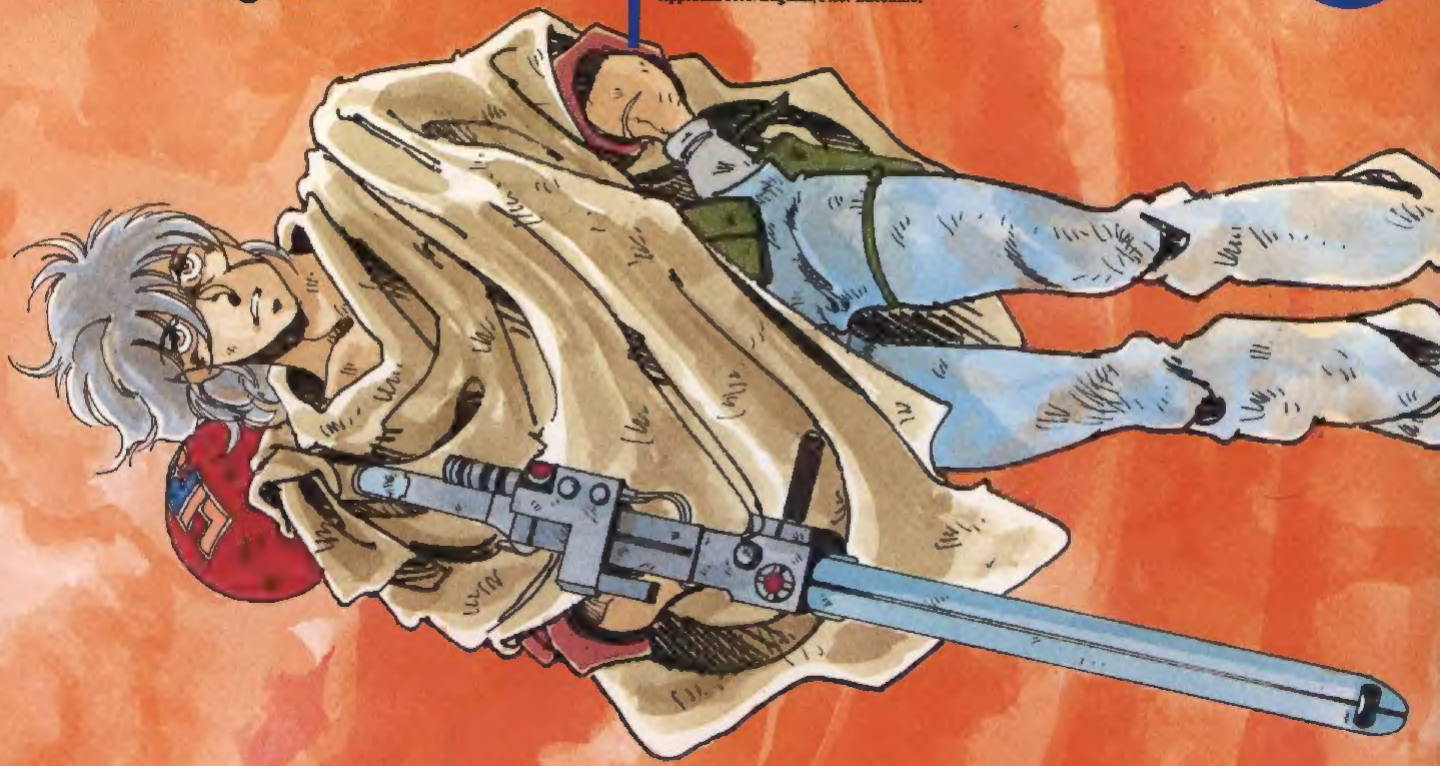
GREY

VOLUME 1

Story and Art by
Yoshihisa Tagami

Pre-Approach/Approach One: Battle Theater 807, Part One/Approach One: Battle Theater 807, Part Two/Approach Two: R&R/Approach Three: The Demilitarized Zone, Part One/Approach Three: The Demilitarized Zone, Part Two/Approach Three: The Demilitarized Zone, Part Three/Approach Four: Shidara Approach Five: Nagoshi, First Encounter

VIZ COMICS



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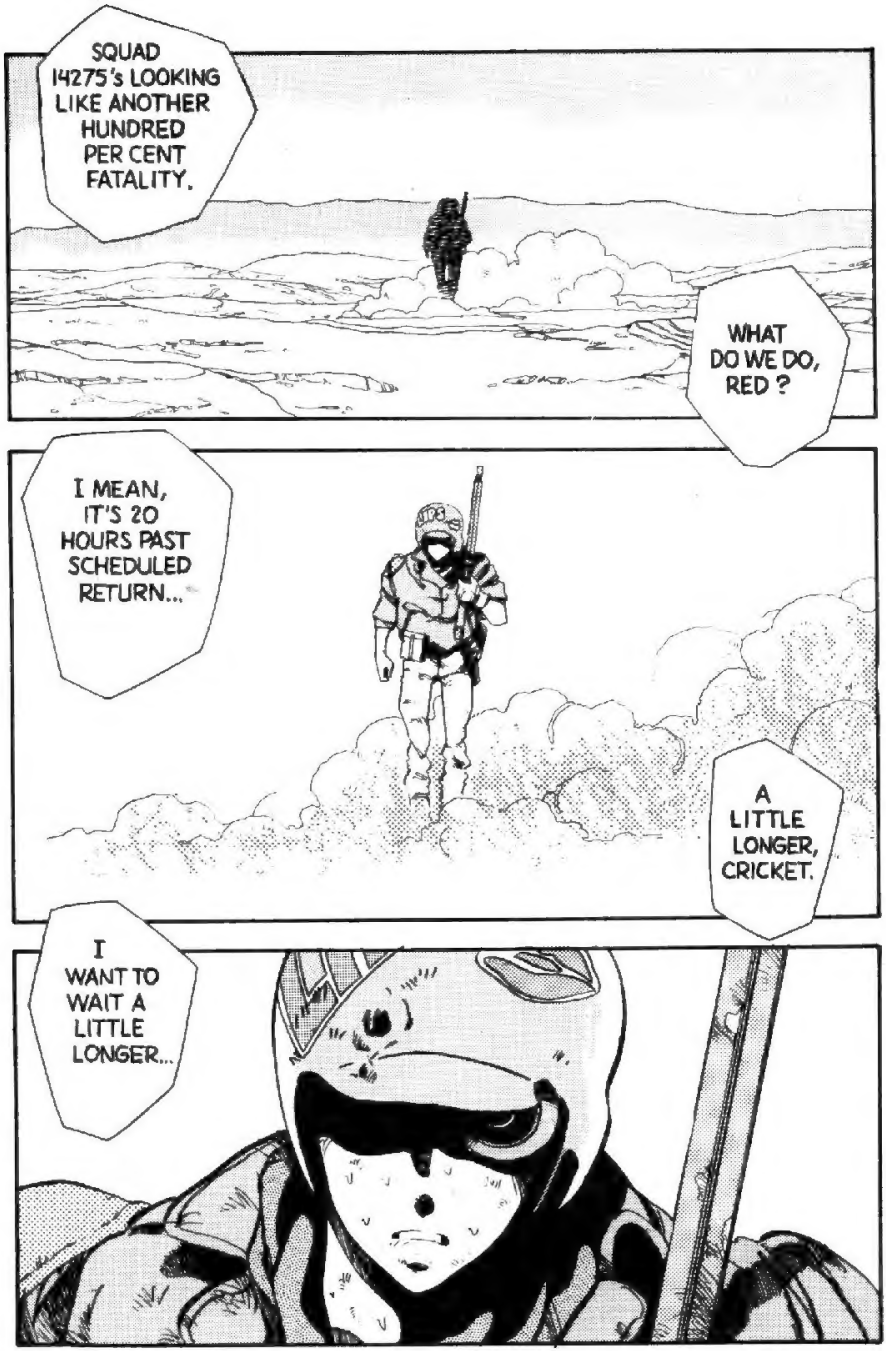
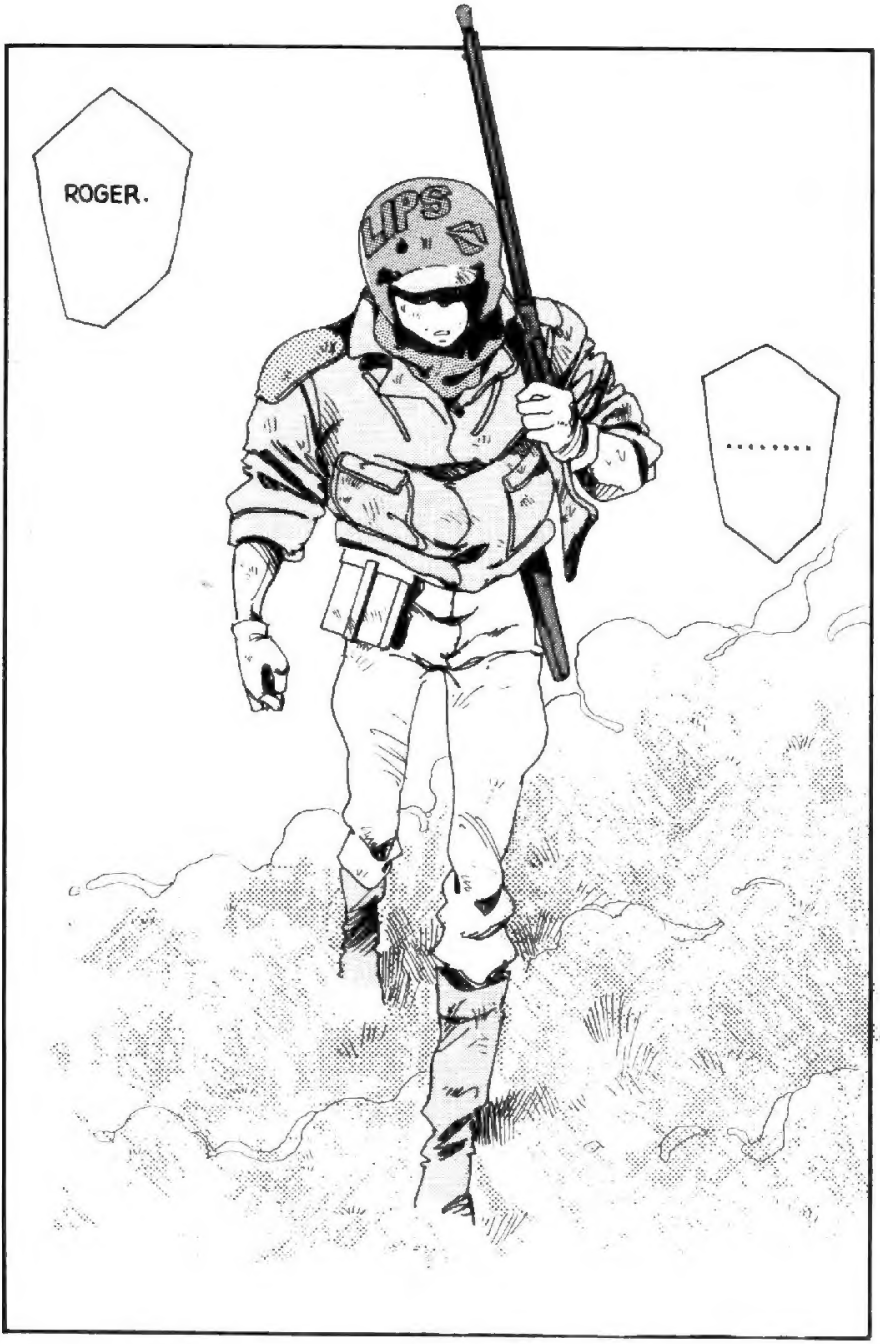
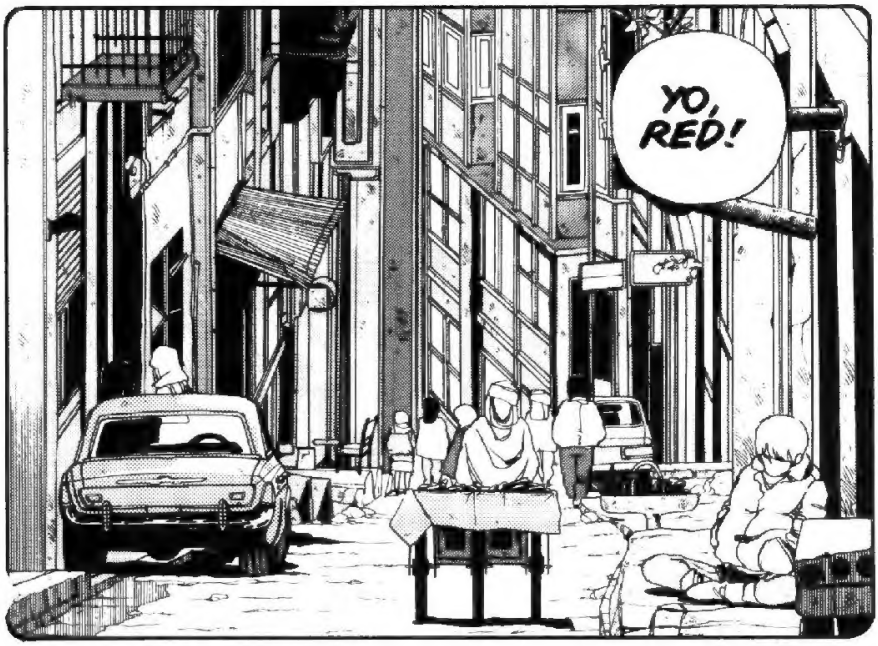
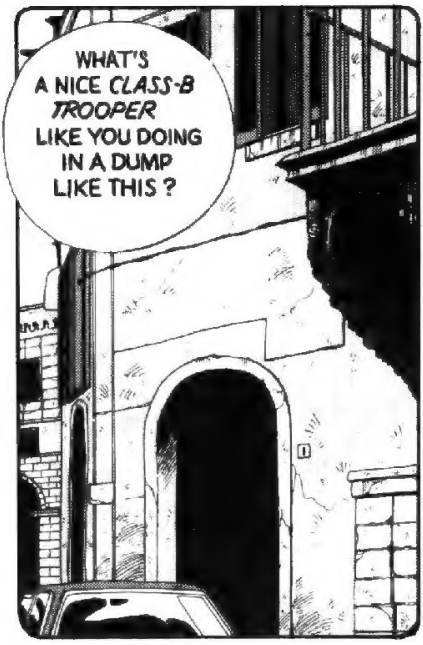
Pre-Approach

HOW'S IT GOING, CRICKET?
NO GOOD. NOT A SIGN.


SQUAD 14275's LOOKING LIKE ANOTHER HUNDRED PER CENT FATALITY.
WHAT DO WE DO, RED ?
I MEAN, IT'S 20 HOURS PAST SCHEDULED RETURN...
A LITTLE LONGER, CRICKET.
I WANT TO WAIT A LITTLE LONGER...

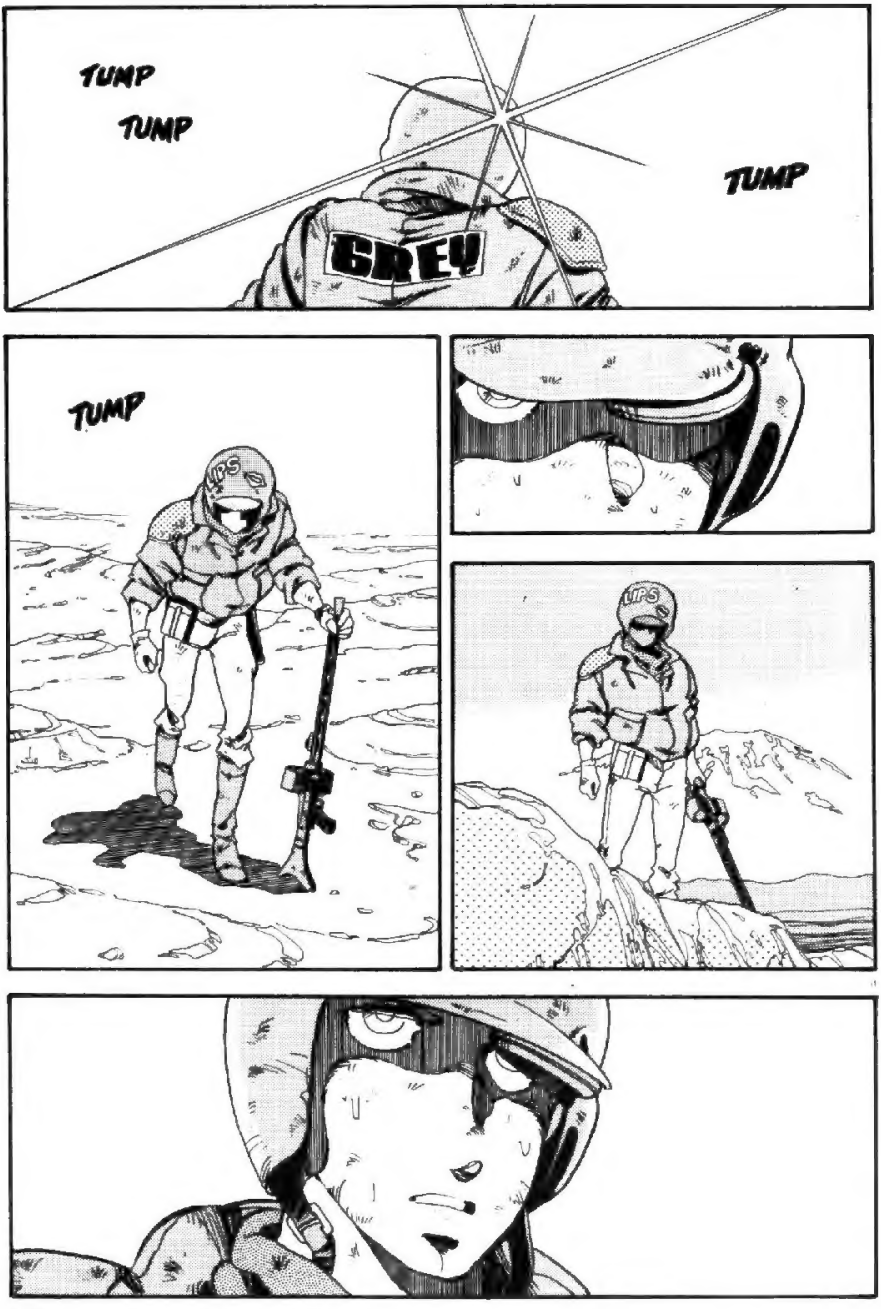

ROGER.
UPS
.....


YO, RED!


WHAT'S A NICE CLASS-B TROOPER LIKE YOU DOING IN A DUMP LIKE THIS ?

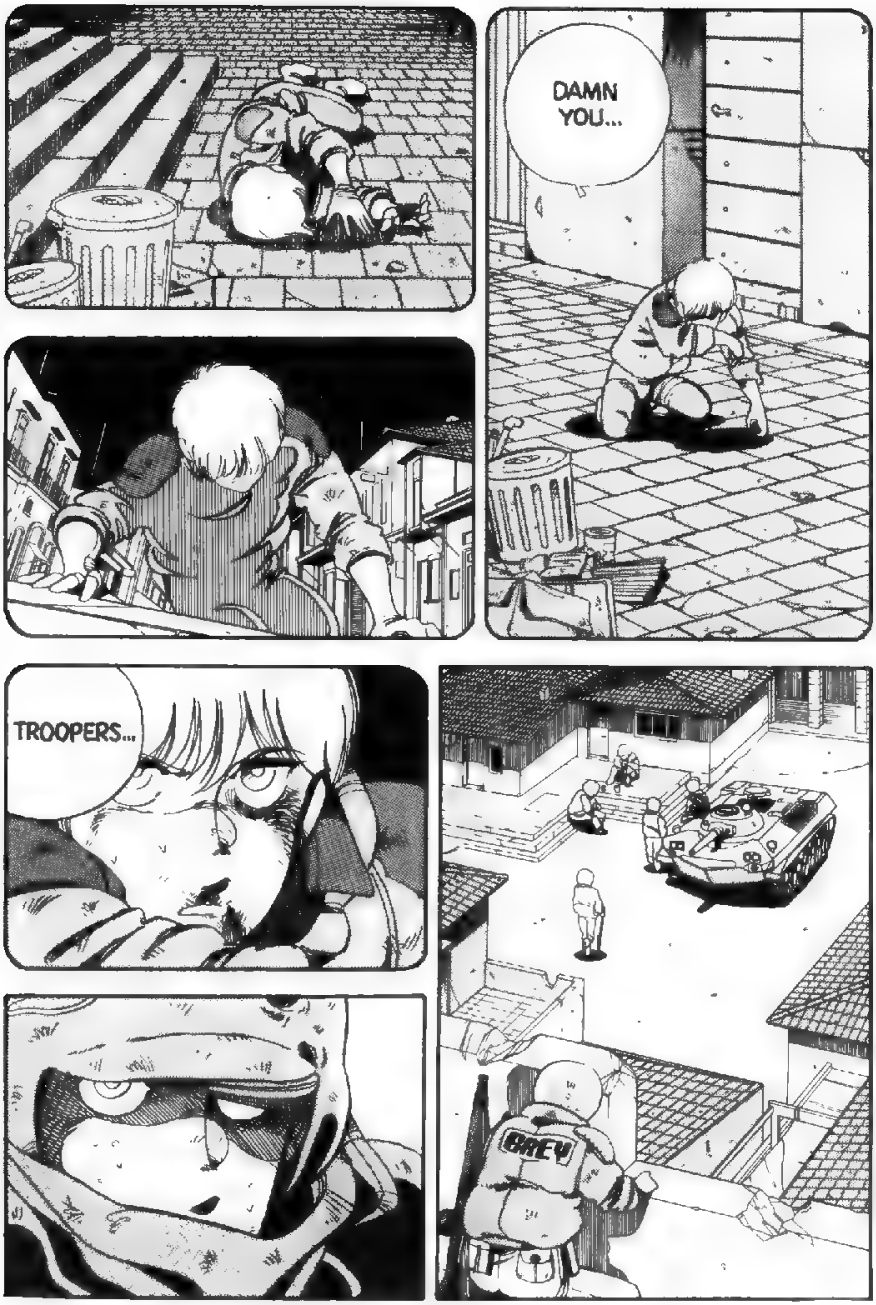
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE JOHN, TAKE A RIGHT AT THAT DOOR.

WOW
CLUNK
LIPS...
SHE'S DEAD.


TUMP
TUMP
TUMP
GREY
TUMP

"SORRY"?!
DON'T GIVE
ME"SORRY"!

YOU DON'T *STARE* AT A TROOPER AND THEN JUST WALK AWAY WITH "SORRY"!
WAP
WE TROOPERS LAY OUR LIVES ON THE LINE, BOY!
KRAK
WE'RE DIFFERENT FROM YOU "*PEOPLE*." WE'RE ANOTHER BREED, UNDERSTAND?
WUMP
AND DON'T YOU EVER FORGET THAT.
WE'RE GOING TO BECOME *CITIZENS*.

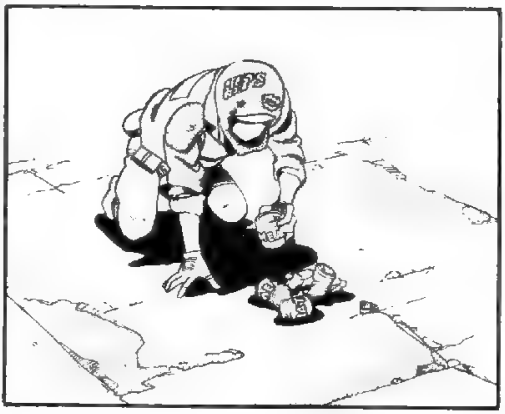

DAMN YOU...
TROOPERS...
GREY

POLICE
UPS

HI.
LIPS...

AND WHAT IF IT WAS ? ARE YOU GOING TO AVENGE MY HONOR ?
WAS IT TROOPERS ?
NOW
RUMMRUMMR
GRROOM
GROOM GROOM

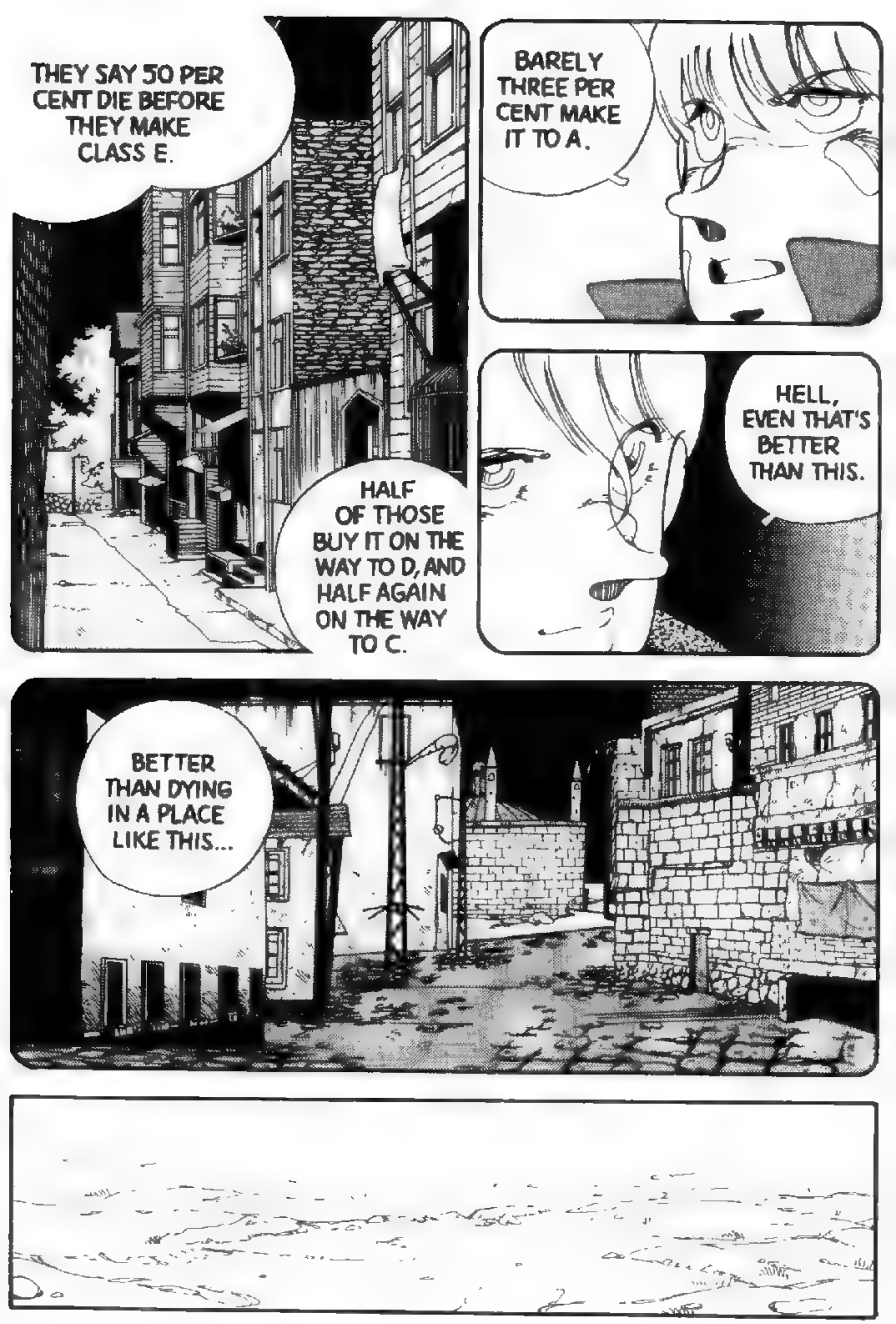
rumm
ruhmm

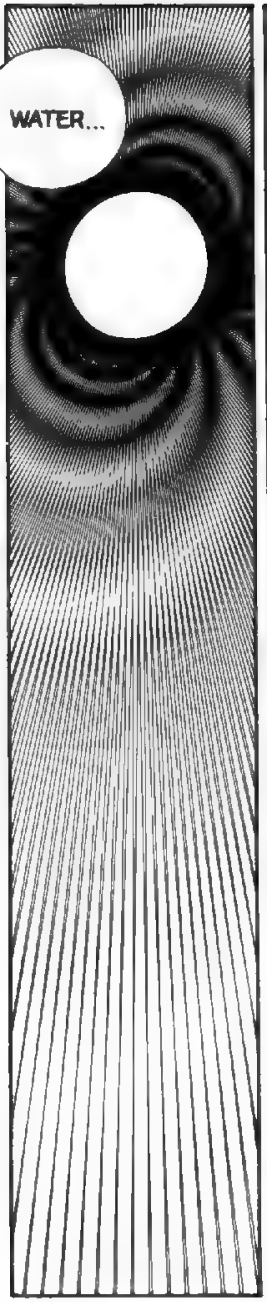


DAY AFTER DAY, AFRAID OF THE INVADERS, AFRAID OF OUR OWN TROOPERS... BREAKING OUR BACKS FOR A FEW *CREDITS*... NEVER GETTING OUT OF THIS TOWN.

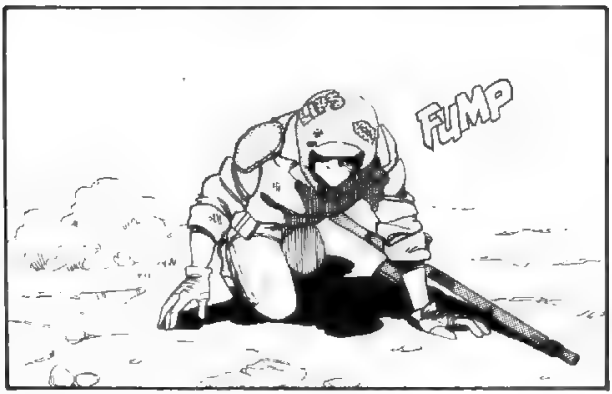
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANYMORE...

IF WE COULD JUST GET INTO THE *CITY*, BECOME CITIZENS... WE'D GET FOOD, SHELTER, SAFETY FROM THE INVADERS.
BUT THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL EVER BE CITIZENS.
SURE THERE IS.
BECOME A TROOPER.
THEY TAKE ANYBODY WHO APPLIES.
WOW
50 CREDITS FOR ONE *OPERATION*. THAT'S JUST 270 HOURS. AND 30 MORE CREDITS FOR EVERY ENEMY YOU ICE.
AT A THOUSAND CREDITS THEY KICK YOU UP TO THE NEXT CLASS.
WE CAN GET OUT OF CLASS F, LIPS. GET TO CLASS E, D, C, B... AND *A*. THEN WE CAN APPLY FOR CITIZENSHIP.
THAT IS, IF WE SURVIVE THAT LONG...


THEY SAY 50 PER CENT DIE BEFORE THEY MAKE CLASS E.
HALF OF THOSE BUY IT ON THE WAY TO D, AND HALF AGAIN ON THE WAY TO C.
BARELY THREE PER CENT MAKE IT TO A.
HELL, EVEN THAT'S BETTER THAN THIS.
BETTER THAN DYING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...


WATER...

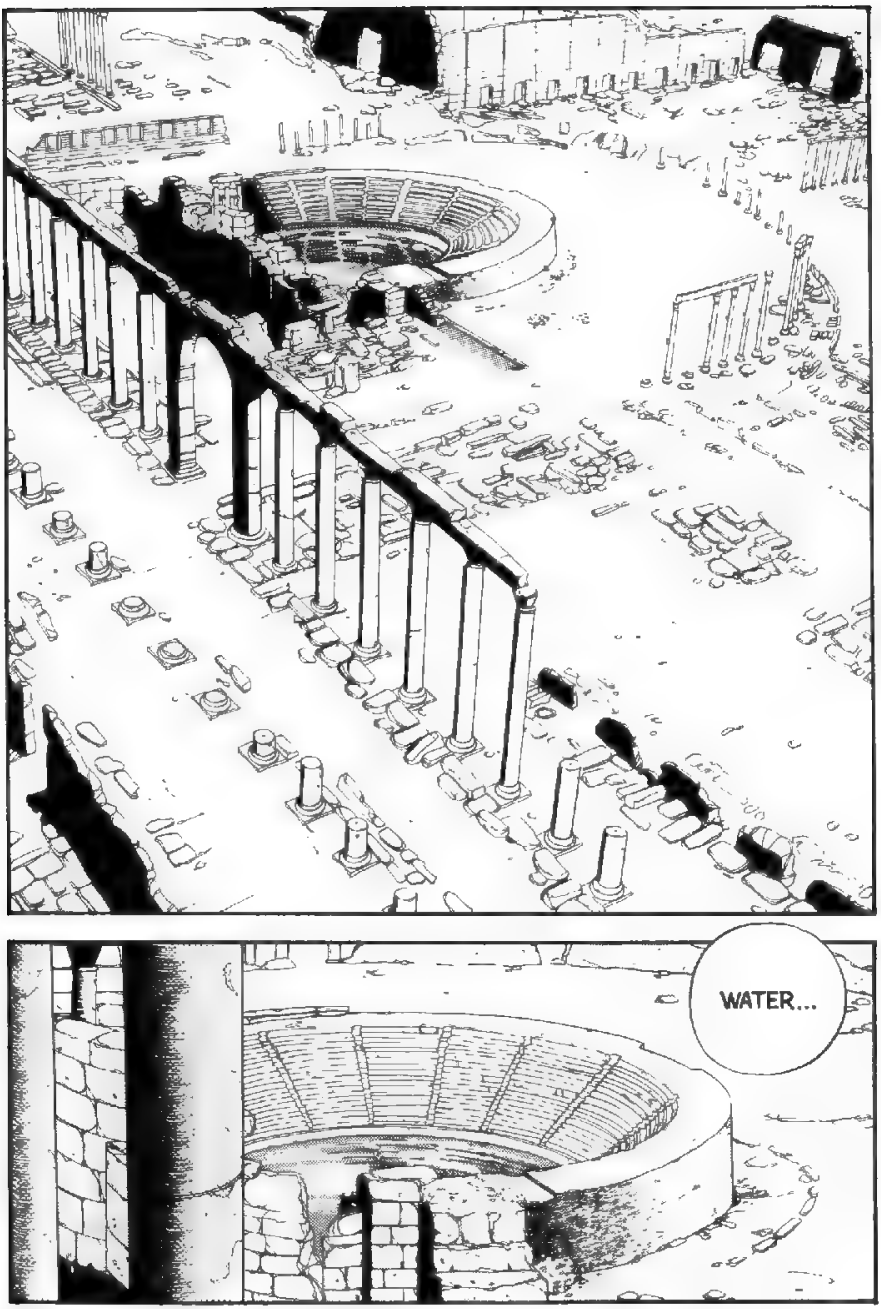
WATER...


FLUMP

LIPS...
ONLY THREE OUT OF EVERY HUNDRED TROOPERS...
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

PEOPLE LIKE US HAVE GOT NO CHOICE. WE LIVE IN THIS TOWN...
...TILL WE DIE.
BUT IN THE MEAN-TIME...
NO.
NOT TONIGHT. I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT.
SURE THING.
I'D HATE TO THINK YOU WERE DOING SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T FEEL LIKE.
GREY...

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE CITY IS LIKE?
NO IDEA.
LISTEN, GREY...
IF I JOINED THE TROOPERS...
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?
Huh
Huh
Huh

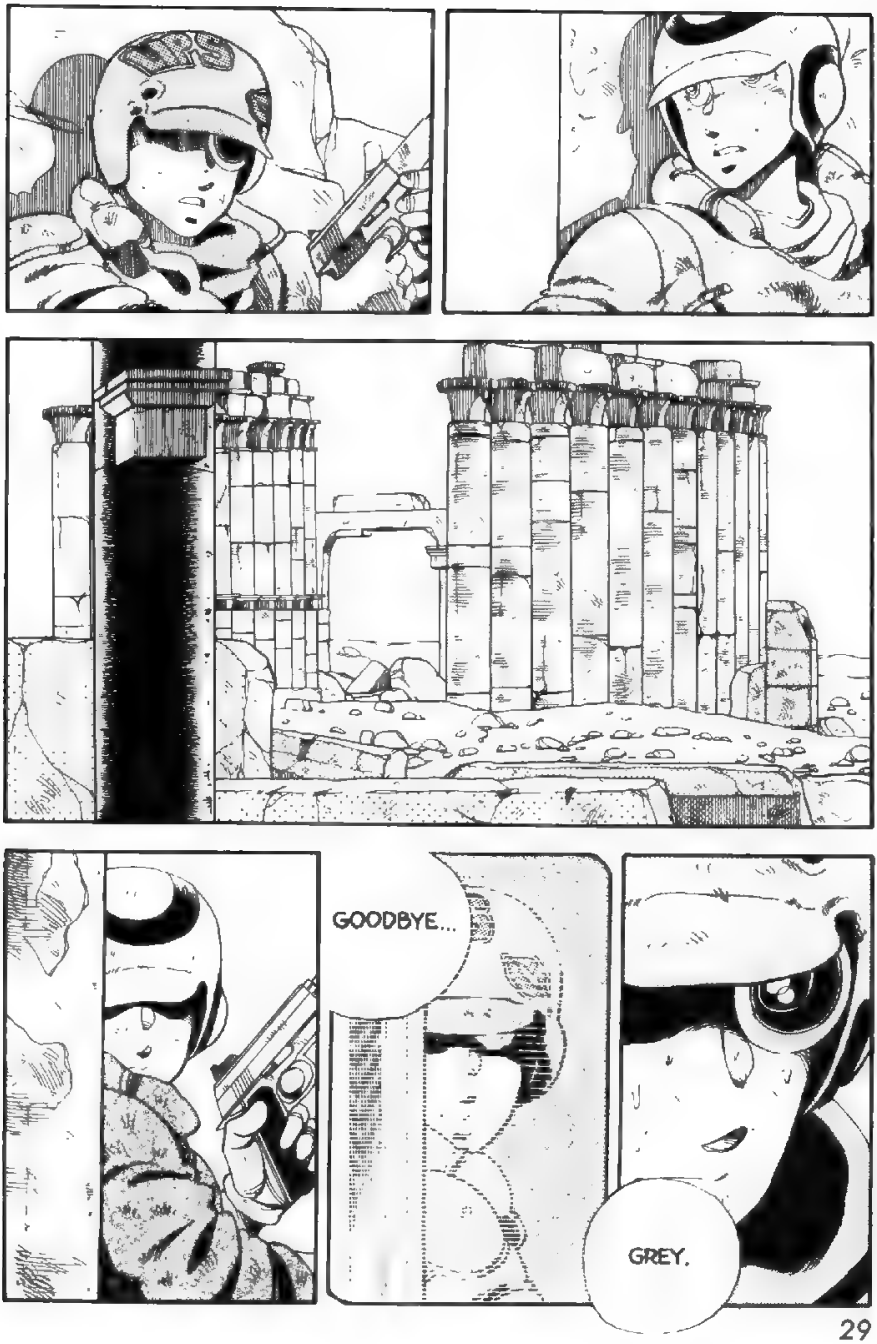

WATER...

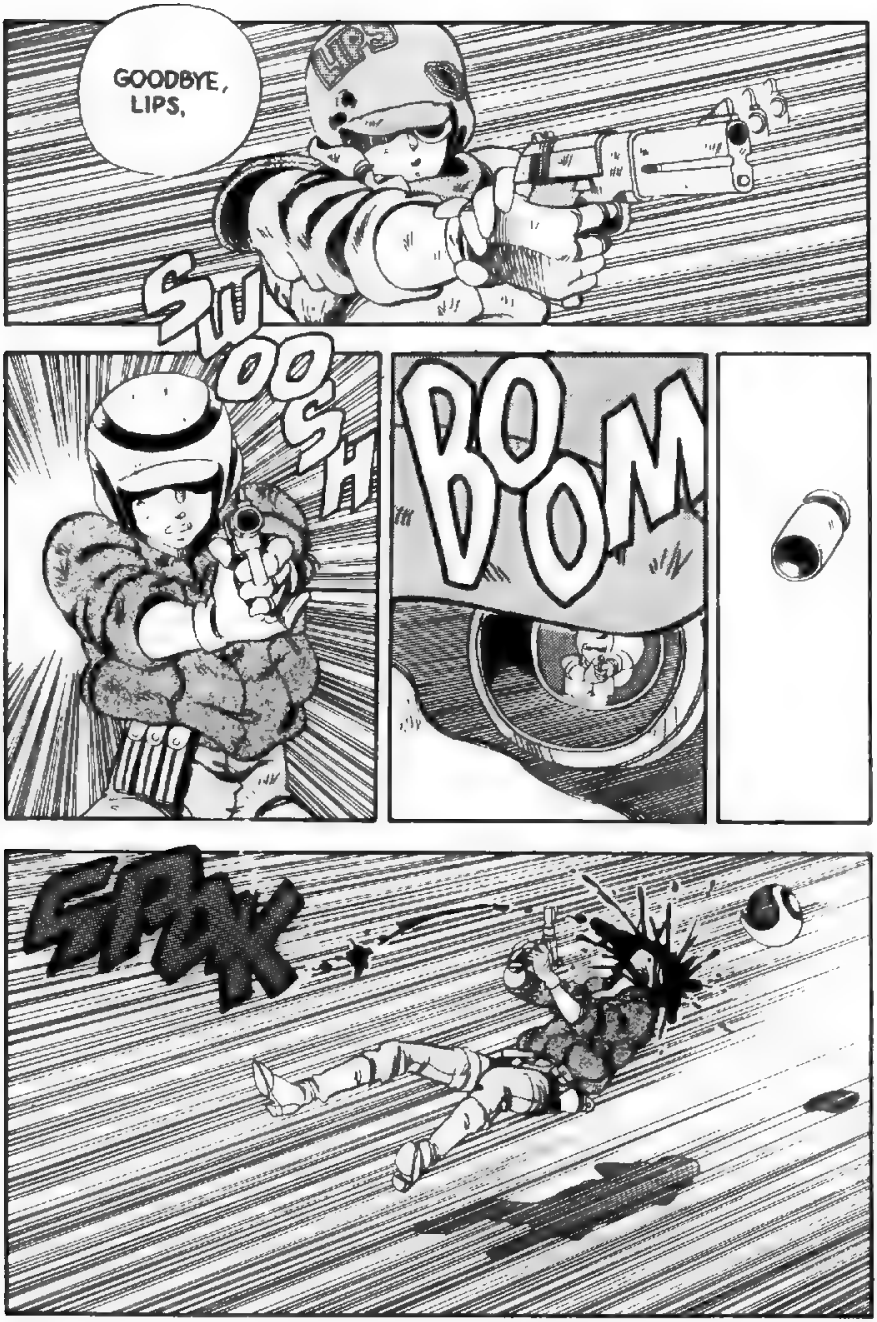
SKKSHH
LIPS
BINGI
LIPS
BAM
KYunnnn

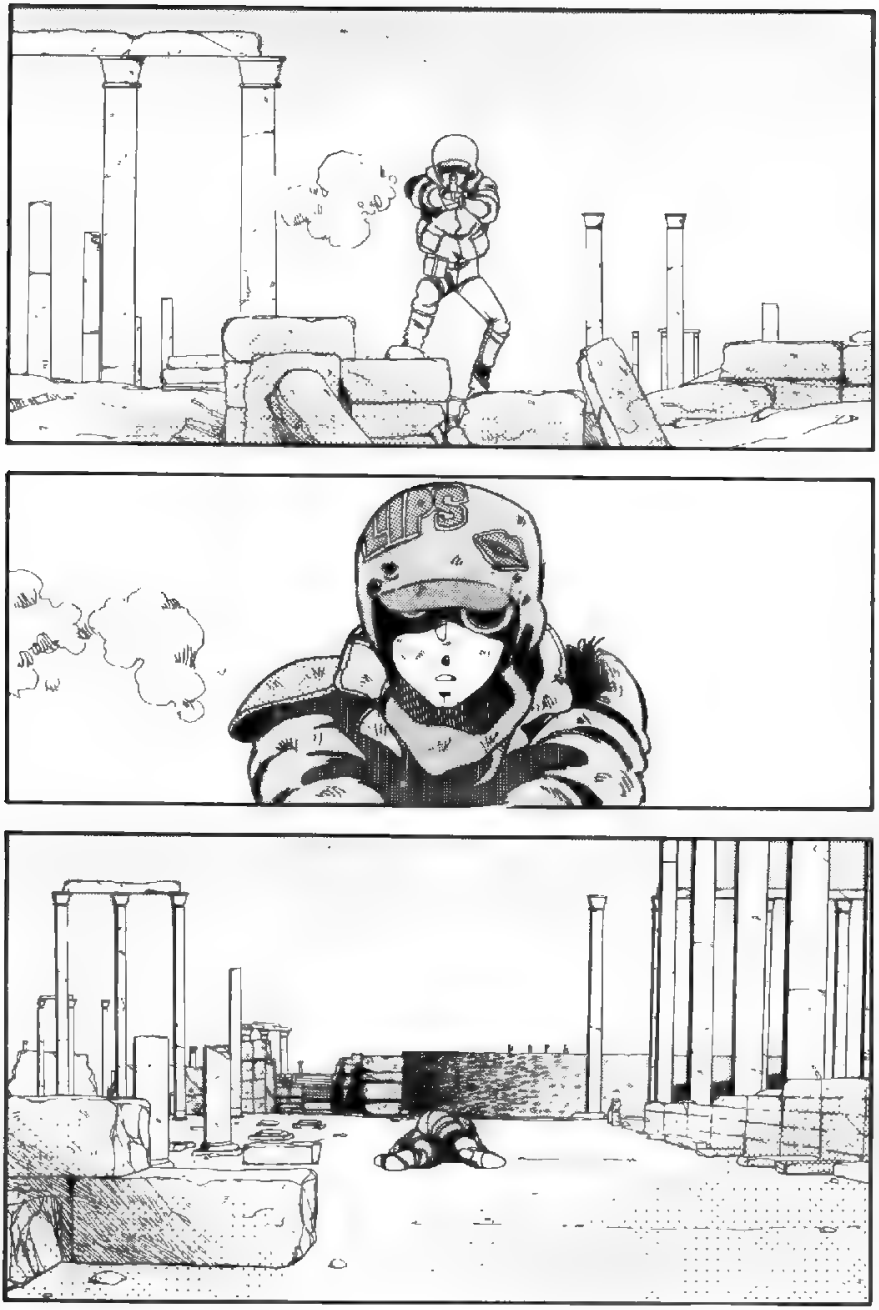
CH-KT!
DAMN.
Ping
FWP
ALONE ?

LIPS
GREY, I...HAVE TO GO NOW.
HURRY IT, LIPS.
YES, SIR.

GREY, THIS IS MY COMMANDER, RED. SQUAD LEADER OF 09283.
CLASS C.
I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE TIME.
GREY ?
GOODBYE.

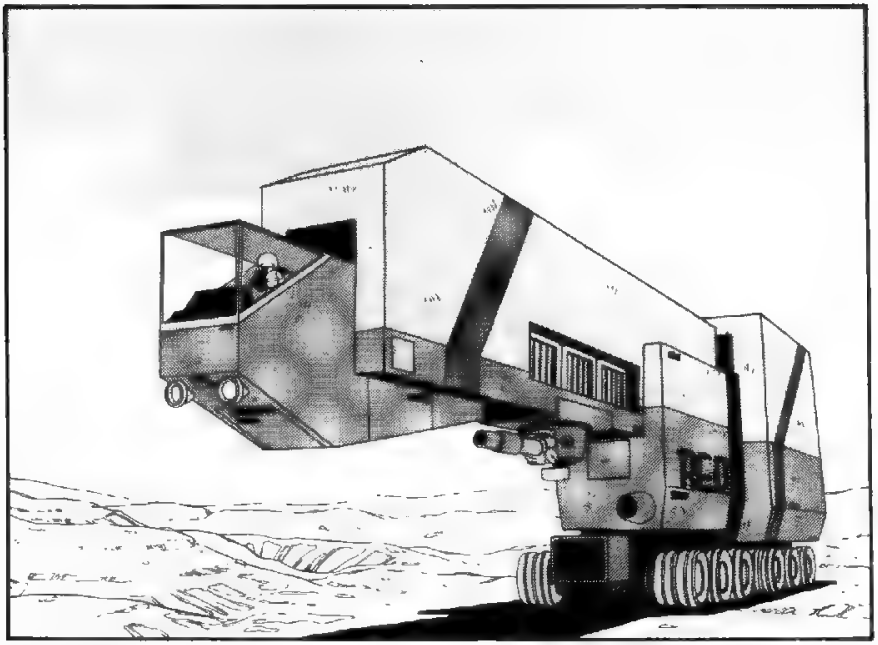

GOODBYE...
GREY.

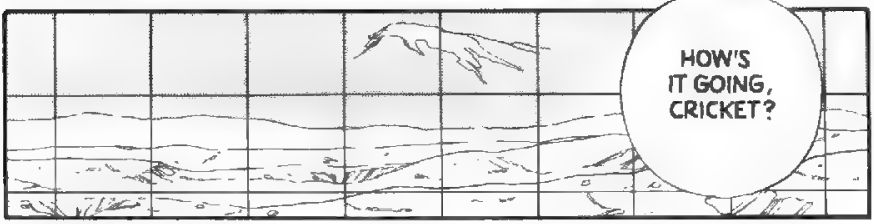

GOODBYE, LIPS.
LIPS
SWOOSH
BOOM
SPANK

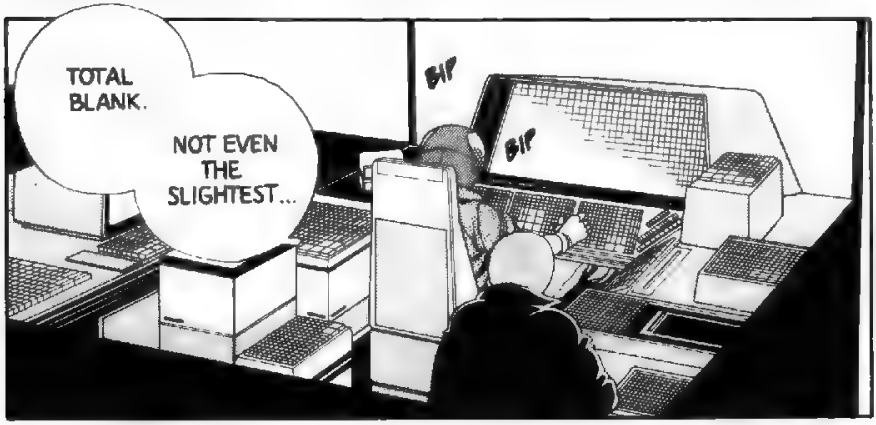

LAPS

HIPS

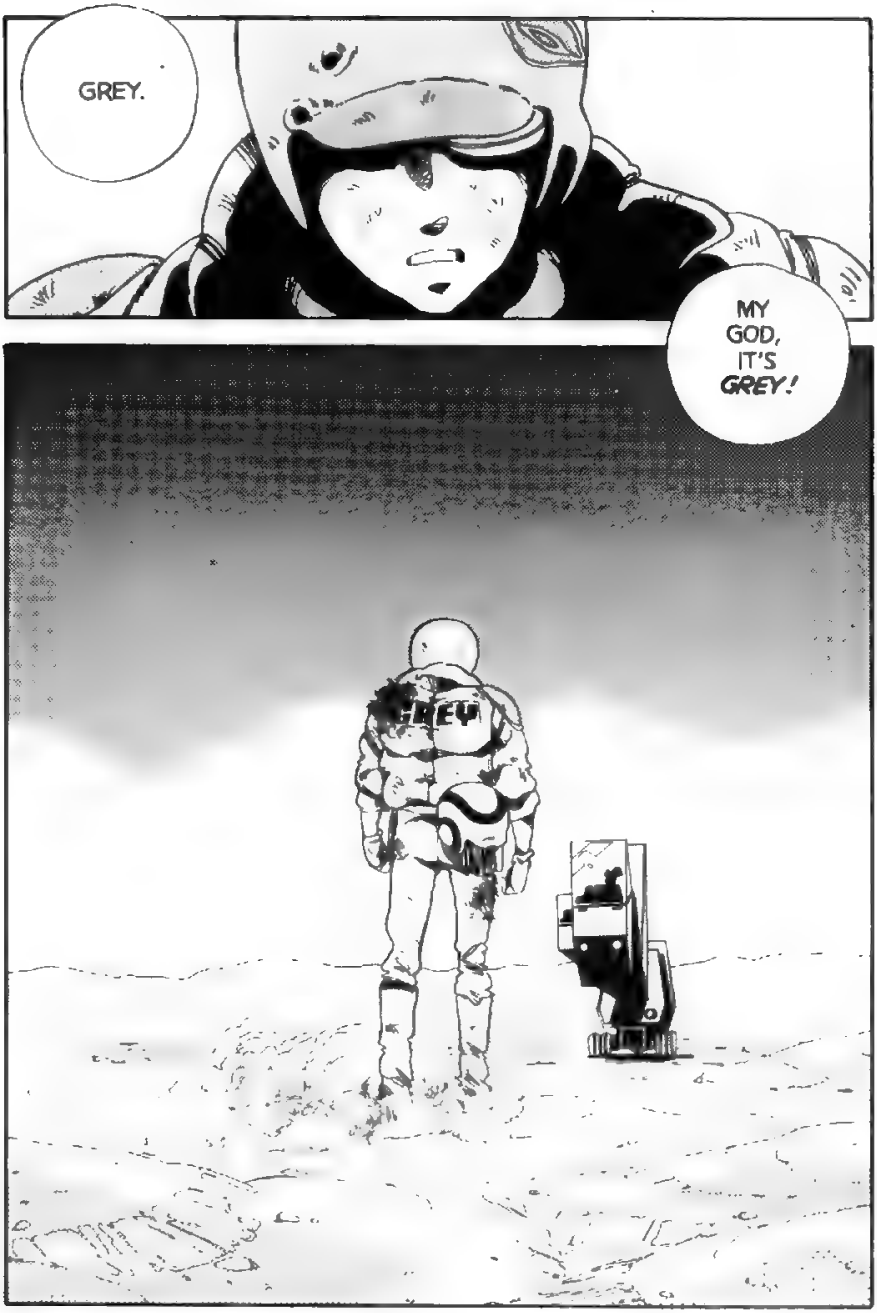
LAPS
SHE JUST WANTED TO BE A CITIZEN.
THAT'S ALL SHE WANTED.
THAT'S ALL.



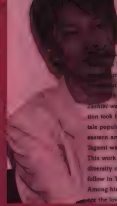

HOW'S IT GOING, CRICKET?


TOTAL BLANK.
NOT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST...
BIP
BIP

WHOA. RESPONSE, RED.
I WOULDN'T BE JOKING ABOUT TROOPERS' LIVES, RED.
YOU SERIOUS?
PUT IT ON THE MONITOR.
STILL TOO FAR. LOOKS LIKE WE GOT ONE SURVIVOR.
T...FA... 404... 9... 53...
CAN YOU READ HIS I.D. SIGNAL?
I'M TRYING.
...CLASS C.


GREY.
MY GOD, IT'S GREY!
GREY

$14.95/USA
$24.55/CAN



PROFILE

…SHI TAGAMI (b. 1958)
…hi Tagami is one of those
…prodigies who was self
…ucated at his teens at the time
…ed in 1978. Entitled
…zumin wawashi, his first publica-
…tion took its title from an old folk
tale popular in the rugged north-
eastern area of Japan where
Tagami was born and grew up.
This work foreshadowed the
diversity of story and theme to
follow in Tagami's later creations.
Among his most popular comics
are the love comedy, Fanfaloney
Fruitloose, which was also made
into a television animation series,
and Ishi no hiroba, a science fic-
tion tale about time warps and
time travel.

GREY is a wonderful adventure
story that uses ideas in the best
possible fashion: as motivational
impetus for a cracking good tale
of survival and development
a fascinating character. An
Grey himself is less than love-
able, it is an important comm
ment on how a society mad for
war can debase and chill its citizens. GREY
is also a powerful statement about the demeaning caste systems we create to keep others "in
their place."

– Herman Kahn

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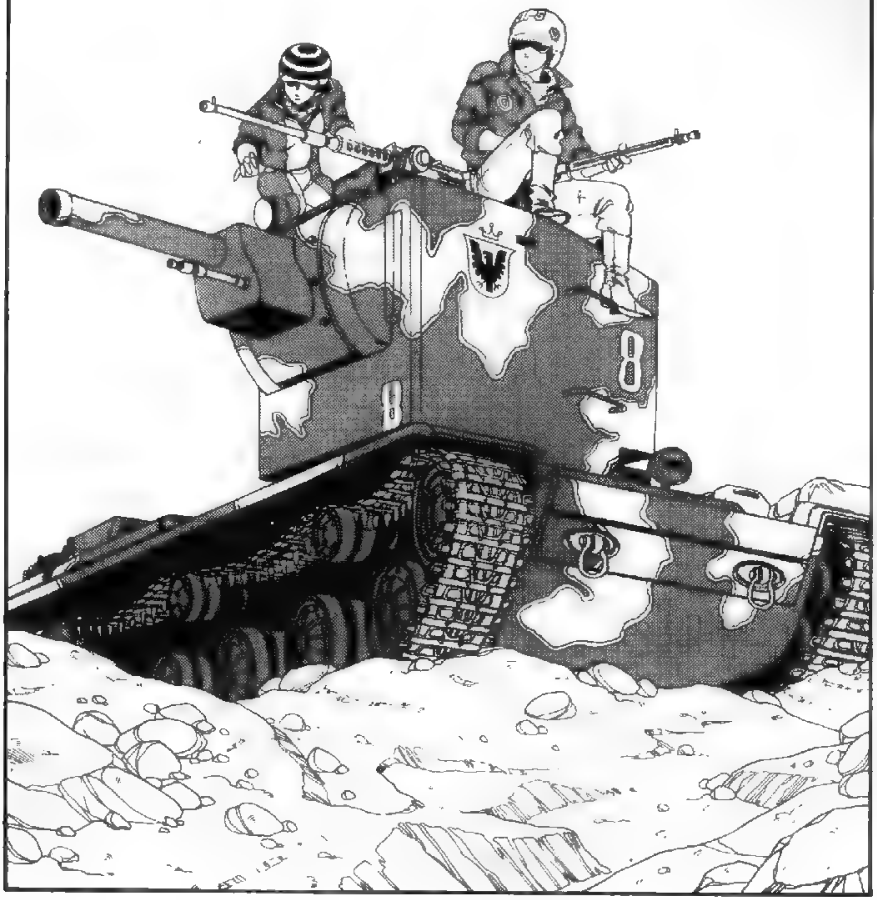
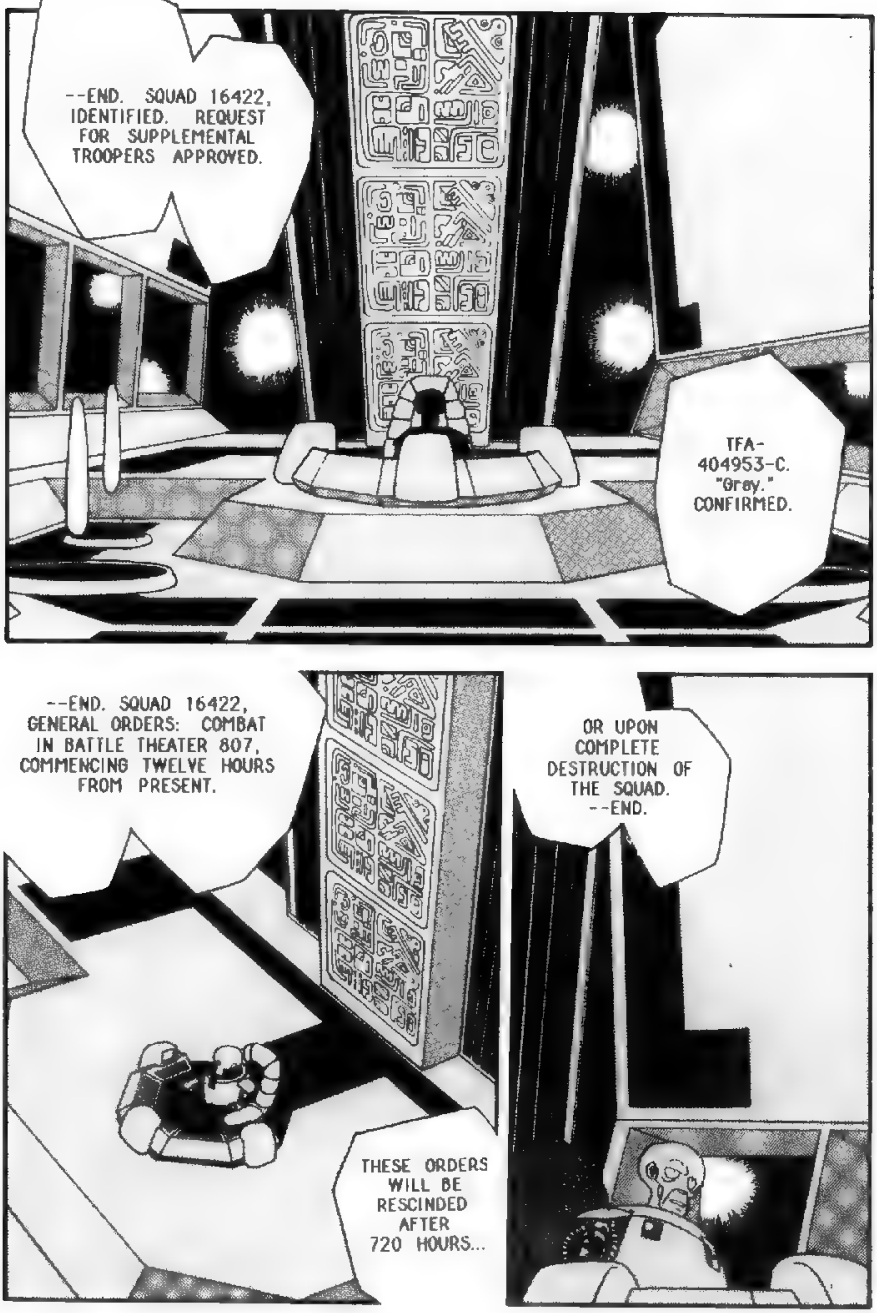
Approach One:
Battle Theater 807, Part 1

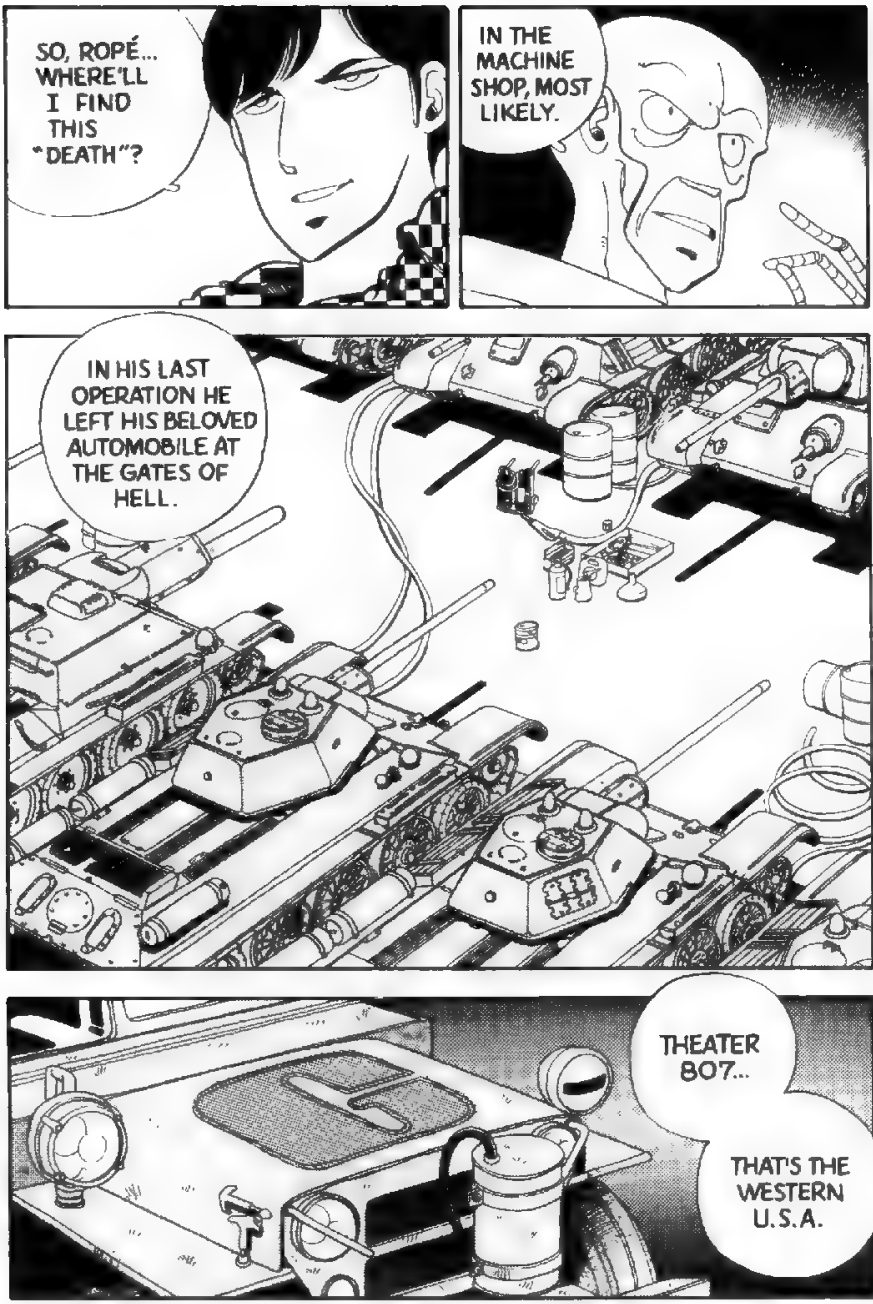


PEC-300
BATTALION,
SQUAD 16422.
SQUAD LEADER,
TNO-112004-C.-
"Hawk."
TNC-095042-F.
"Nova."
TNR-815155-D.
"Sky."
TNN-436747-D.
"Timmie."
TPB-009717-D.
"Leo."
TPA 268379-E.
"Chris."


--END. SQUAD 16422, IDENTIFIED. REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTAL TROOPERS APPROVED.
TFA-404953-C. "Grey." CONFIRMED.
--END. SQUAD 16422, GENERAL ORDERS: COMBAT IN BATTLE THEATER 807, COMMENCING TWELVE HOURS FROM PRESENT.
THESE ORDERS WILL BE RESCINDED AFTER 720 HOURS...
OR UPON COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE SQUAD. --END.

CLICK
QUESTIONS, HAWK?
MY APPLICATION WAS FOR *TWO* SUPPLEMENTAL TROOPERS. GRANTED, THIS ONE IS A CLASS C, BUT...
AND YOU WILL FIND THAT THIS ONE CAN DO THE WORK OF FIVE CLASS E TROOPERS.
EVEN A SINGLE SUPPLEMENTAL IS UNHEARD OF, HAWK.
GREY?

HE'S A YELLOW-SKIN. I DON'T LIKE YELLOW-SKINS.
WAIT A MINUTE... CLASS C... ASIAN...
GREY. LIKE... "GREY DEATH?"
YEAH. I'VE HEARD OF HIM TOO.
HE JUMPED FROM F TO C IN ONLY THIRTEEN OPERATIONS NINE OUT OF THOSE THIRTEEN, HIS SQUAD WAS TOTALLY WIPED. EXCEPT FOR HIM.
YOU NEED TO REVISE THAT, CHRIS. GREY RECENTLY RETURNED FROM HIS FOURTEENTH OPERATION. BY HIMSELF.

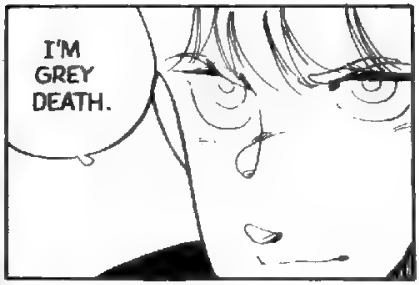

SO, ROPÉ... WHERE'LL I FIND THIS "DEATH"?
IN THE MACHINE SHOP, MOST LIKELY.
IN HIS LAST OPERATION HE LEFT HIS BELOVED AUTOMOBILE AT THE GATES OF HELL.
THEATER 807...
THAT'S THE WESTERN U.S.A.

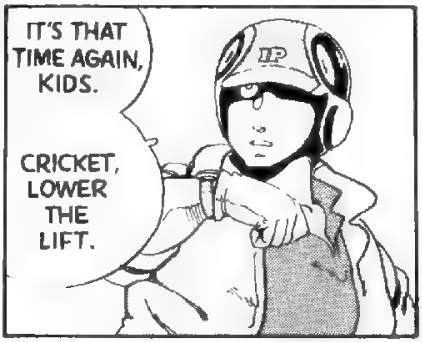
TRY TO BRING THE CAR BACK THIS TIME, WILL YOU? IT'S TOO DAMN COMPLICATED TO BUILD AGAIN.
TELL THE ENEMY THAT.
I'M NOT THE ONE WHO WANTS TO BLOW IT TO SHIT.
SO HOW MANY CREDITS YOU NEED?
TO MAKE CLASS B?
I PULLED 290 IN THE LAST OP. WENT IN WITH 3030. SO THAT LEAVES... 680, RIGHT?
WAIT A MINUTE. OPERATION PAY IS 50. TO MAKE 290 LAST TIME, YOU HAD TO TAKE OUT... EIGHT ENEMIES. THAT'S A WHOLE SQUAD, GREY. NOBODY CAN DO THAT.
I JUST DON'T WANT TO DIE.

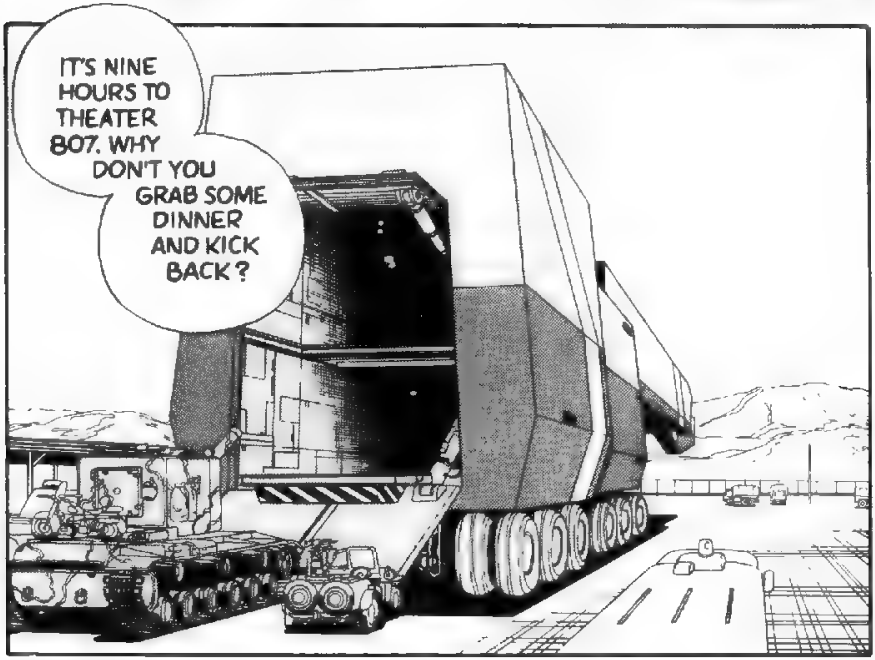
THE BEST WAY TO STAY ALIVE IS TO KILL ALL YOUR ENEMIES.
IF YOU MAKE IT TO CLASS B...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
THINK I SHOULD BREAK OPEN SOME CHAMPAGNE?
HOW ABOUT BECOMING AN INSPECTOR? IT'S A LOT QUICKER THAN GOING FOR A CLASS A I.D. NUMBER, AND YOU'RE SAFE AGAINST GETTING KILLED.
WHAT DO YOU SAY, GREY? WHY DON'T WE WORK TOGETHER?
AN INSPECTOR...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DECIDE RIGHT NOW.

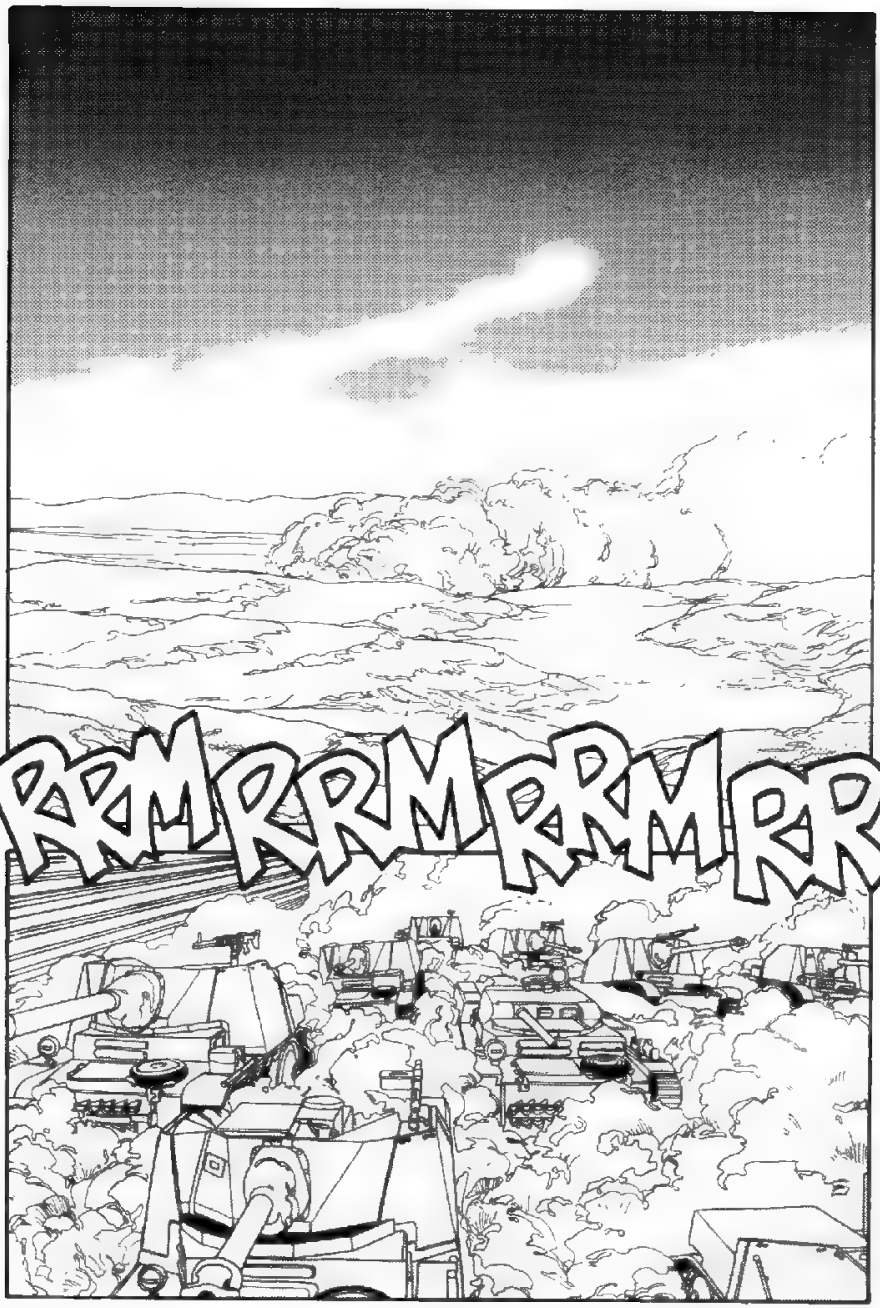
SO, RED...
HOW'S MY TANK BEEN BEHAVING?
HELLO, HAWK.
I PUT SOME NEW SHOES ON HER. NOT RUBY SLIPPERS, BUT THEY'LL DO.
GOOD.
MAYBE SHE'LL FEEL A LITTLE MORE COOPERATIVE IN THE NEXT BATTLE.
.....

SO YOU'RE "DEATH."
I'M HAWK. LEADER, SQUAD 16422.
I LIKE YOUR MANNERS.

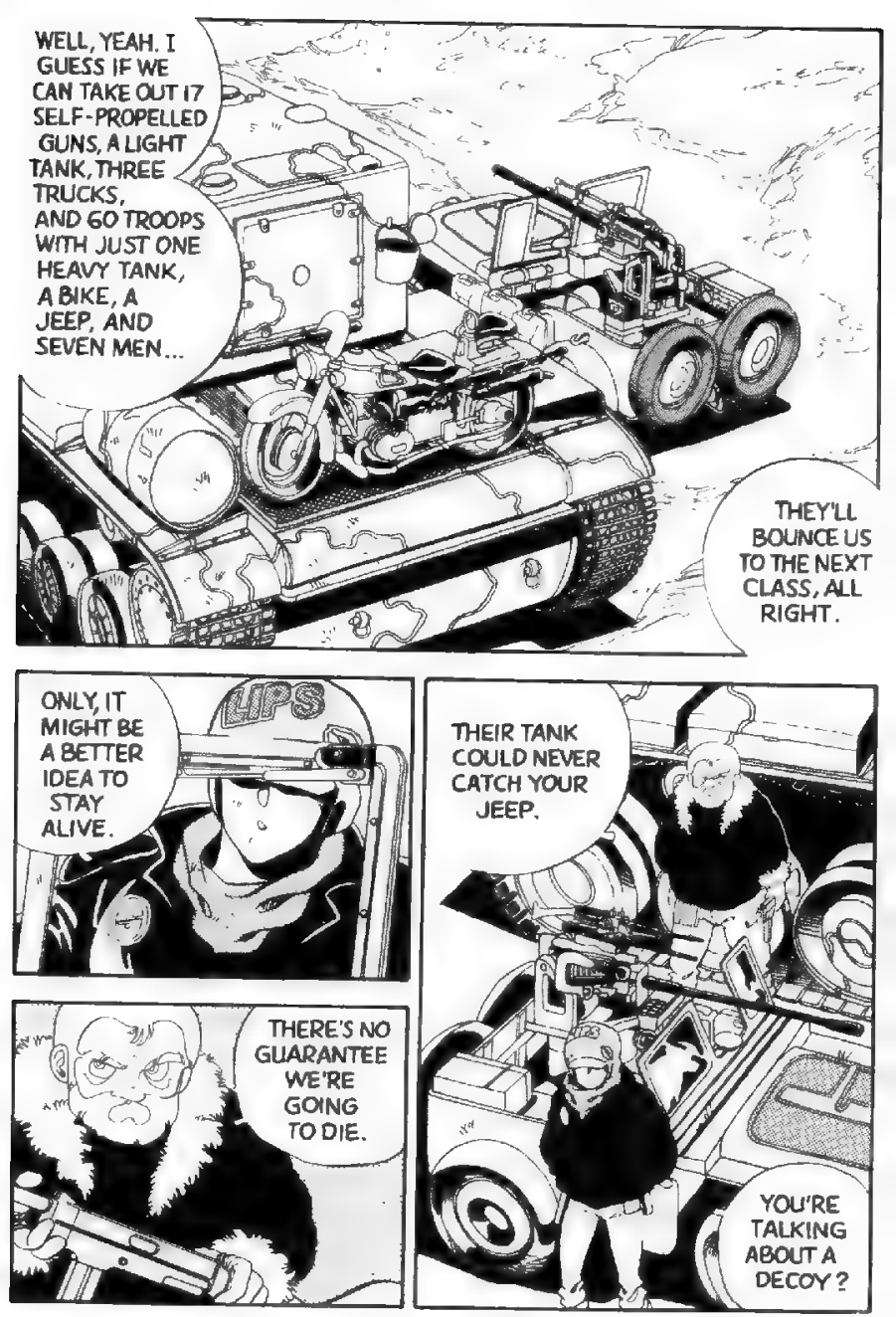

I'M GREY DEATH.


IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN, KIDS.
CRICKET, LOWER THE LIFT.


IT'S NINE HOURS TO THEATER 807. WHY DON'T YOU GRAB SOME DINNER AND KICK BACK?

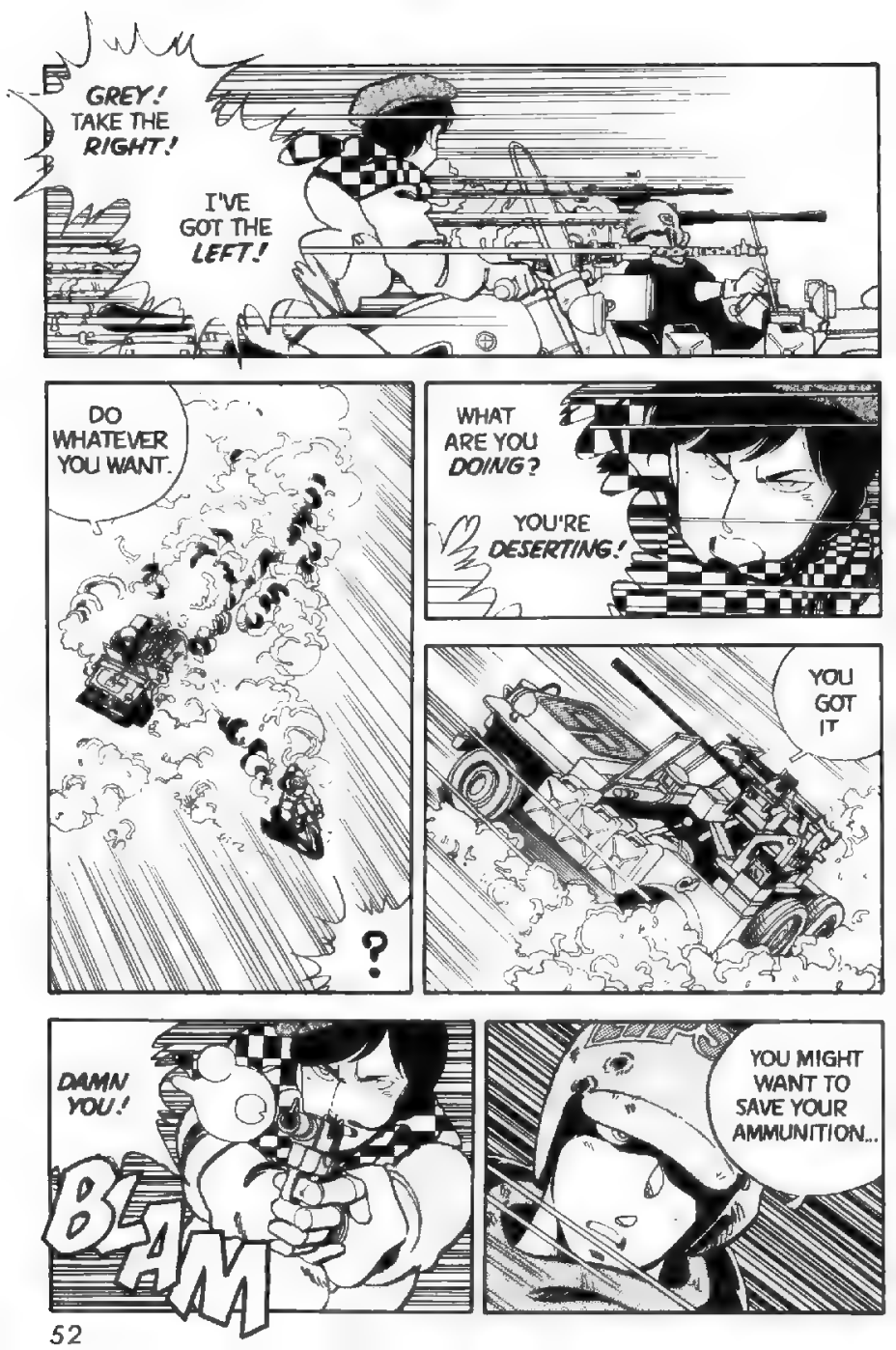

RRM RRM RRM RR

RRM RRM RRM
...14, 15...
...16... 17...
ONE COMMAND TANK...
...THREE FUEL TRUCKS...
21 TOTAL. WHAT DO WE DO, SKY?
WIPE 'EM ALL. AND GET AN EXPRESS TICKET TO THE NEXT CLASS UP.
AND WHO'S GONNA "WIPE 'EM ALL," SKY?
WE ARE, OF COURSE.


WELL, YEAH. I GUESS IF WE CAN TAKE OUT 17 SELF-PROPELLED GUNS, A LIGHT TANK, THREE TRUCKS, AND 60 TROOPS WITH JUST ONE HEAVY TANK, A BIKE, A JEEP, AND SEVEN MEN...
THEY'LL BOUNCE US TO THE NEXT CLASS, ALL RIGHT.
ONLY, IT MIGHT BE A BETTER IDEA TO STAY ALIVE.
UPS
THERE'S NO GUARANTEE WE'RE GOING TO DIE.
THEIR TANK COULD NEVER CATCH YOUR JEEP.
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A DECOY?

IF YOU CAN DRAW THEM WITHIN 1200 METERS, I CAN DESTROY THEM. NO MAYBES.
THEIR GUNS CAN'T PIERCE THIS TANK'S ARMOR AT MORE THAN 800 METERS.
THAT'S FINE.
BUT WHO'S GONNA RUN DECOY IN THE JEEP?
WELL, IT'S YOUR JEEP.
IT'S MY LIFE, TOO.
HOW'D YOU GET THE NAME, "DEATH"? YOU'RE JUST A CHICKENSHIT.
WE HAVE A MOTOR-CYCLE, DON'T WE?
AND IF WE'RE JUST TALKING A DECOY, A BIKE'S AS GOOD AS A JEEP...

ISN'T IT, SKY?
DAMN.
HAWK! THE ENEMY...
THE ENEMY'S LAUNCHED A "BEE"!
COMBAT POSTS! SKY--GREY-- SCISSOR 'EM! DISRUPTIVE FIRE ON BOTH FLANKS!
SO NOW IT'S MINI-TRACERS. THAT'S A WELL-ARMED BUNCH OUT THERE.
GRROOMM


GREY! TAKE THE RIGHT!
I'VE GOT THE LEFT!
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
YOU'RE DESERTING!
YOU GOT IT
DAMN YOU!
BLAM
YOU MIGHT WANT TO SAVE YOUR AMMUNITION...

...FOR THE ENEMY!
WOOM!
UH!
BOM
VROAR
BA-BOOM!
SWIVEL LEFT, TIMMIE!
LEFT!
LEO.!
CHECK.

YWANG
GREY, YOU BASTARD!
AFTER WE FINISH THIS OFF--
I'M GONNA BLOW YOU TO PIECES!
KAWOOOM

VIP
DA DA DA DA
!!
DAMN!
GrrOM GrrOM GrrOM
THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF THIS!

HAWK, IF THEY GET ANY CLOSER, WE'RE *DEAD!*
WHOMP
SO WHAT DO WE DO? THEY'RE *FASTER* THAN WE--
DAMN IT, DON'T ASK *ME* WHAT--
Uh...
WHAT *IS* IT, NOVA?
!!

DA DA DA DA
GREY!
SHAKE IT, SHITHEADS!
COVER ME!
Grrrmm

RRRRR
DA DA DA
I GOT MY OWN ATTITUDE ON THESE THINGS.
KUH WOOM
IT'S THE SLOW ARMORED VEHICLES THAT MAKE THE BEST DECOYS.
VROOOOG

WE TOOK OUT 4 SELF-PROPELLED GUNS...THAT'S 12 MEN.
THAT'S 2.4 MEN--60 CREDITS--FOR EACH OF US.
I HAD 0.7 MEN LEFT FROM MY LAST OPERATION. ADDED IN, THAT'S 90 CREDITS.
90 CREDITS!
HOW ABOUT YOU, GREY?
YOU TOOK OUT 5 GUNS... 15 MEN... 450 CREDITS.
THEY STILL HAVE THE "BEE."

SO THEY'LL HIT US AGAIN. SCRATCH OFF THE GUN SKY TOOK OUT... THAT LEAVES 11.
WE STILL HAVE TO GET BACK ALIVE. WHY DON'T WE COUNT OUR CHICKENS THEN?
ONE QUESTION, GREY.
YEAH?
WHY DID YOU DISOBEY MY ORDER?
PERSONAL POLICY. I DON'T FOLLOW STUPID ORDERS.
IT KEEPS ME ALIVE.
YOU'RE THE SQUAD LEADER. BUT WE'RE BOTH CLASS C, AREN'T WE, HAWK? THAT MEANS I DON'T HAVE TO JUMP WHEN YOU BARK.
DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, HAWK?

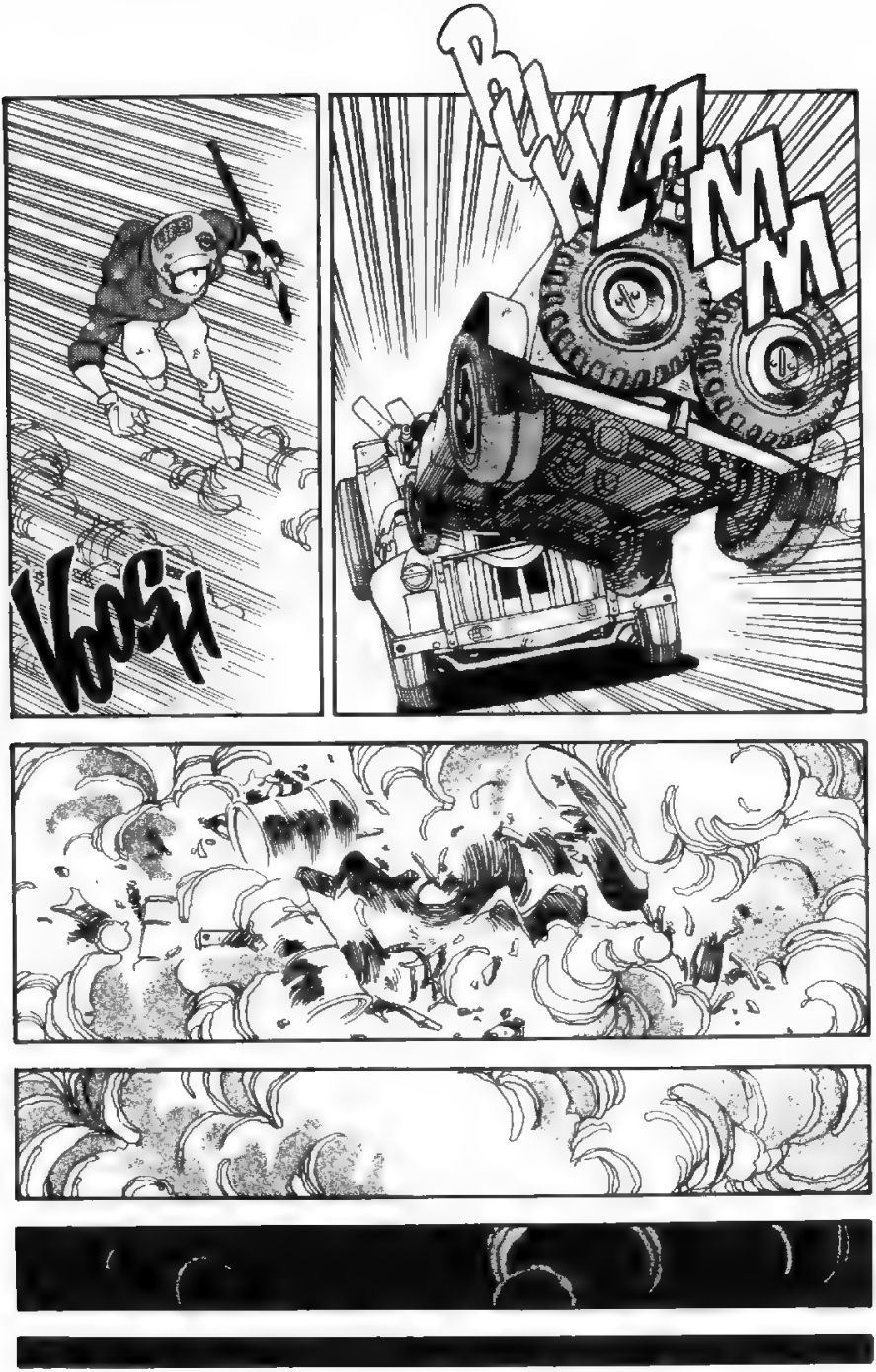
I'M GLAD.
HEY!
ping
WHHHHP
WHAT THE HELL--?!
BAD NEWS.
A "BEE."
THEY'RE COMING.

HARD-WORKING BOYS.
RRMRRMRRM
GREY! TAKE THE POINT WITH YOUR JEEP. WE'LL COVER.
SURE THING.
!!
WOOM!

BJHZAM!
VREEE
DOM DOM DOM

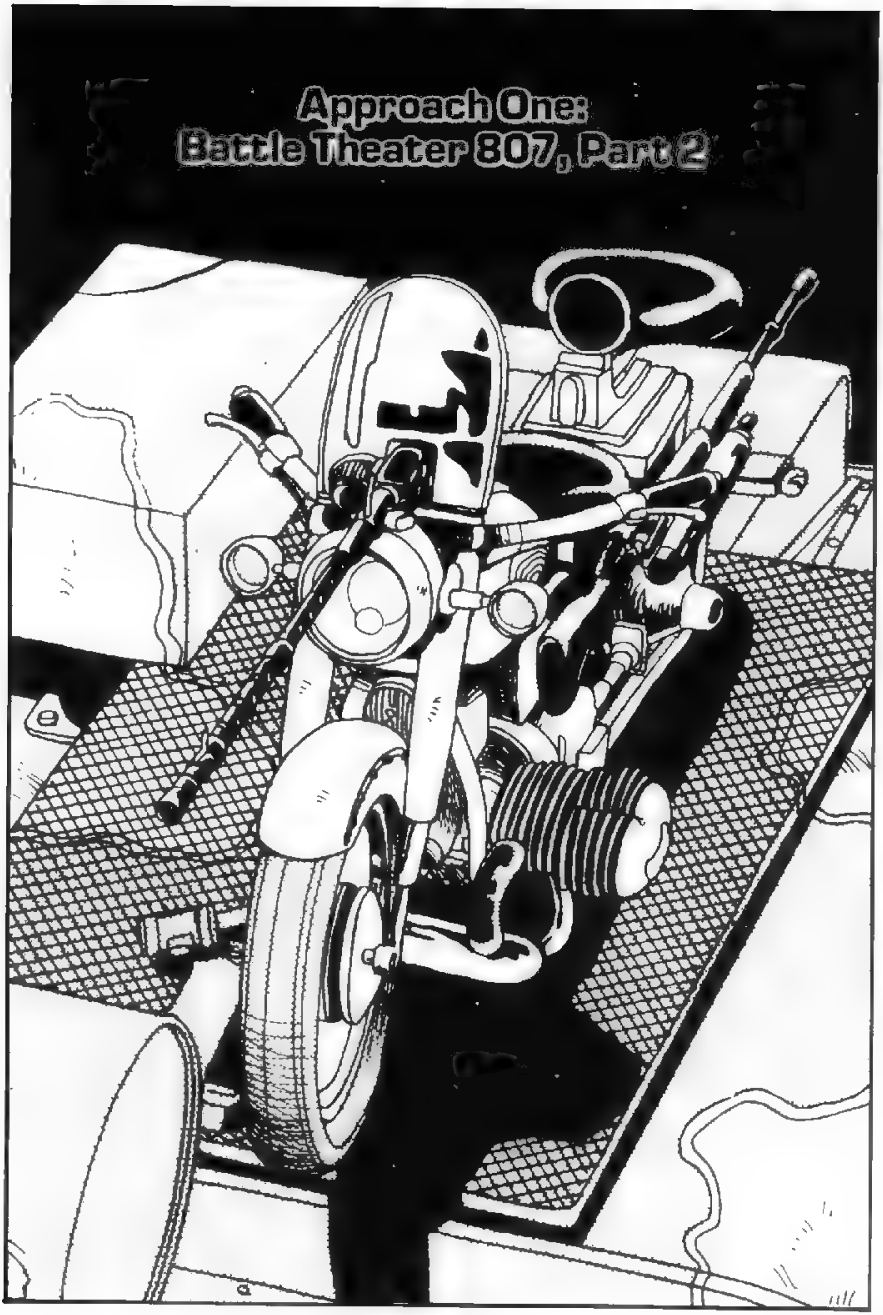
BOOM
BASTARDS!
KUMP!
I WON'T BE HIT!
BOOM
KRAK!
VREEOOM
BACKED MYSELF INTO A CORNER...

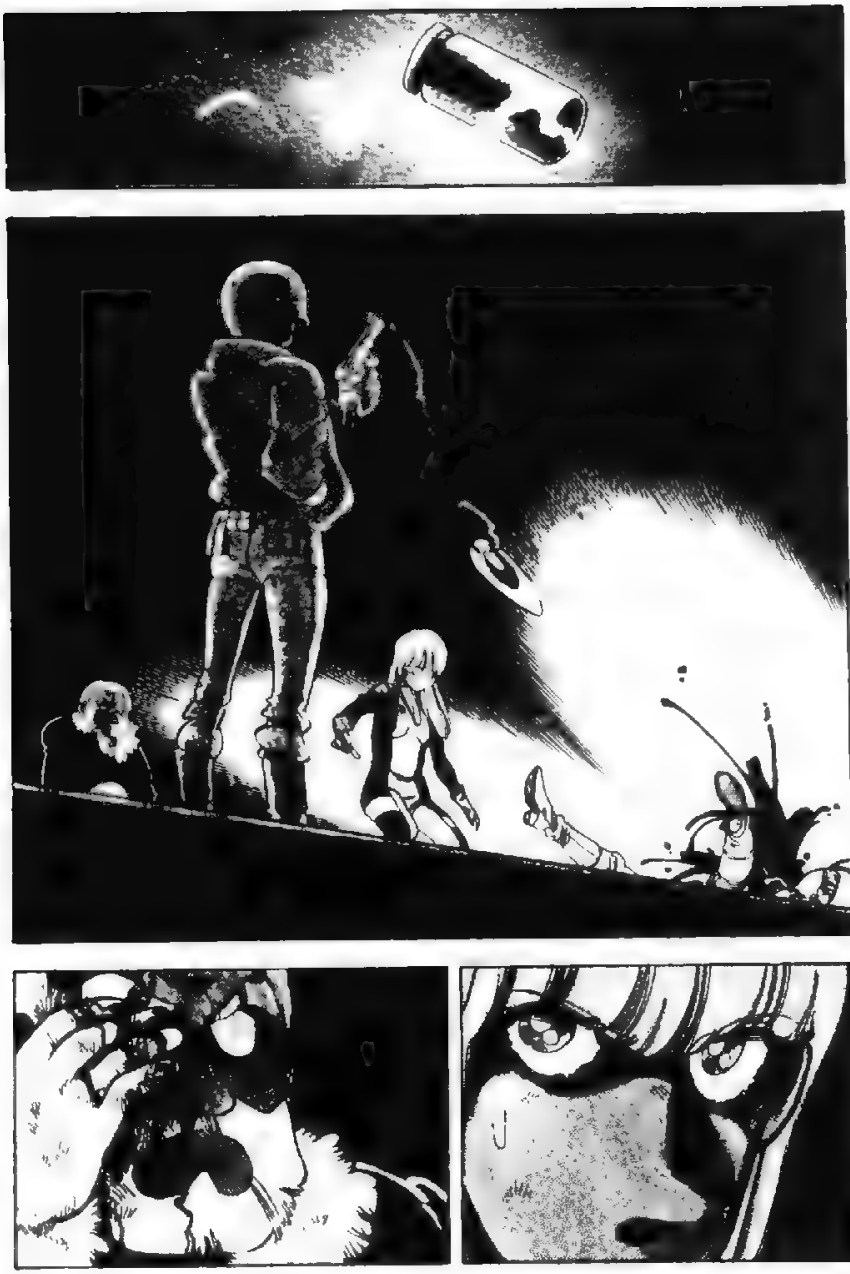
DAMN!
BOOM!
SQUEEEE
ONE WAY TO GO...
ONLY THREE TARGETS...
GOT 'EM.


KLAMM
Vroosh

CHRIS... HOLD ON...
LEO.
WHERE'S HAWK AND TIMMIE?
THEY... IT WAS A DIRECT HIT.
AND THE ENEMY?
I WIPED EIGHT. COMMAND TANK AND TWO GUNS SLIPPED.
CHRIS!!

NOVA... GET UP.
GREY?
DON'T MAKE HER SUFFER ANY MORE.
NO MATTER HOW LONG SHE SUFFERED...
THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY REWARD.
BAM


Approach One:
Battle Theater 807, Part 2



...SHE WAS STILL ALIVE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
CORPSES DON'T DO MUCH SHOOTING.

CATCH, NOVA.
CAN YOU WALK, LEO?
I'M A LITTLE DIZZY, BUT I'M ALL RIGHT.
DAMN IT, GREY! YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE CHRIS LYING THERE!
YES I CAN.
NOVA, I FEEL BAD ABOUT CHRIS TOO. BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO BURY HER. WE HAVE TO EVACUATE BEFORE THE ENEMY LAUNCHES ANOTHER *BEE*.
BUT *LEO*--

WHAT'LL IT BE, LEO?
IF YOU STAY, GIVE ME BACK MY HEAVY MACHINE GUN.
GREY...
I DON'T PLAN ON BECOMING A DEAD BODY JUST TO BURY A DEAD BODY.
CRUNCH
NOVA.
...OKAY.

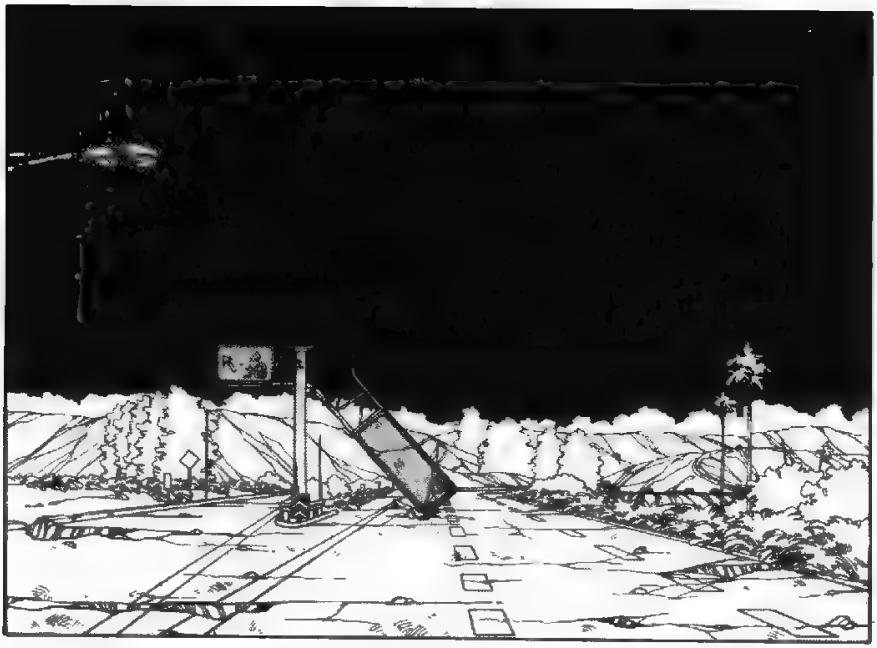
GREY, HOW IS IT THAT YOU GOT TO CLASS C IN ONLY 13 OPERATIONS?
BY IGNORING YOUR COMMANDER'S ORDERS, ABANDONING STRATEGIES, BETRAYING YOUR FELLOW *TROOPERS?*
Y-YOU...YOU JUST SAVE YOUR OWN ASS AND COLLECT YOUR *CREDITS.*
AND WHAT'S WORSE... TO SAVE YOURSELF, YOU EVEN KILL YOUR ALLIES. THAT'S DISGUSTING.
ENOUGH, NOVA.

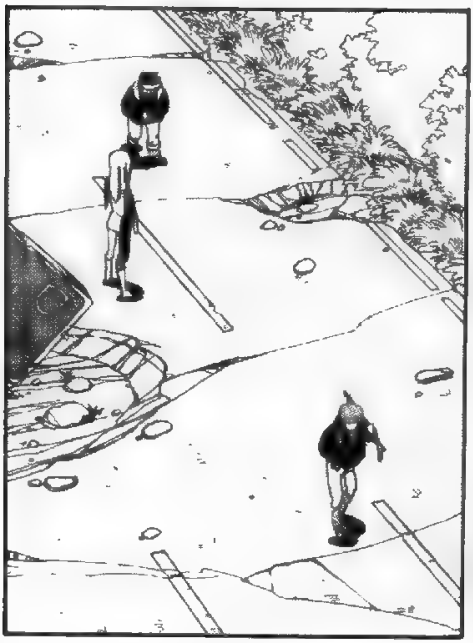
THIS IS NO TIME TO TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS.
DOESN'T IT MAKE YOU SICK?
HAWK, SKY, TIMMIE, CHRIS--THAT BASTARD KILLED THEM ALL!
BECAUSE HE IGNORED HAWK'S ORDER AND DISRUPTED OUR TACTICS--THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
STOP, NOVA!
DON'T MIND HER, GREY. SHE'S UPSET BECAUSE CHRIS DIED...THAT WAY...
IT'S OKAY, LEO.
CHRIS AND NOVA WERE BEST FRIENDS EVEN BEFORE THEY BECAME TROOPERS.
DOESN'T MATTER.
WHAT NOVA SAYS IS TRUE.

YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT! YOU'RE A COWARD, GREY.
YOU'RE A TRAITOR AND A MURDERER!
WHAT IS IT, LEO?
THE WOUND HURTING?
NO... ALL RIGHT...
...I'M ALL RIGHT...
220 MORE HOURS UNTIL WE'RE RELEASED FROM COMBAT. THE DEMILITARIZED ZONES... WHERE RED WILL GET US... IT'S 1000 KILOMETERS SOUTHWEST OF HERE...
HOW ARE WE GOING TO ADVANCE 100 K.M's A DAY WITHOUT VEHICLES?
ESPECIALLY WHEN THE ENEMY STILL HAS THREE VEHICLES
WE CAPTURE THEM.

HOW? WE DON'T EVEN KNOW THEIR POSITION.
THE BEE...?
WE'LL ASK THEM FOR A DATE.
YOU'RE GOING TO ALERT THEM TO *OUR* POSITION? INTENTIONALLY?
THERE'S A RUIN OF AN OLD CITY FOUR KILOMETERS SOUTHEAST OF HERE.
YOU WANT TO DRAW THEM INTO CLOSE COMBAT?
THAT WOULD BE *SUICIDE!*
NO, NOT NECESSARILY.
SELF-PROPELLED GUNS HAVE TO CHANGE DIRECTION BEFORE THEY CAN SHOOT AN ENEMY... BEHIND THEM.

IF YOU'RE WITH ME-- LET'S GO.
NOW?!
YOU WANT TO WAIT FOR MORNING?
GIVE YOU TIME TO GRAB SOME BACON AND EGGS AND READ THE PAPER?
SCREW IT. I'M THE GRAPEFRUIT AND ORANGE JUICE TYPE.
...JUST LIKE *LIPS*.
LIPS?
NOTHING. LET'S GO.





WHAT IS IT, LEO? HARD FOR YOU?

NO, NO. I'M... I'M ALL RIGHT.

IF YOU SAY SO.
WAIT, GREY. PLEASE.
LET HIM REST.
DO YOU WANT TO REST, LEO ?
NO, I'M OKAY.
NO, LEO! YOU'RE BLEEDING AGAIN!
I'M OKAY...
WE'D BETTER HURRY, GREY. IF THE ENEMY'S LAUNCHED ANOTHER BEE...
!?
DOWN NOVA!
WHAT ?

MORTAR!!
KHOOM
WERE WE TRACED?
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
THEY WITHDREW THE BEE DURING THE SECOND ATTACK!
THEY'VE GOTTA BE SURVIVORS, CUT OFF FROM THEIR SQUAD. PROBABLY NO HEAVY WEAPONS.
SCF
SCF
IT'S TOO SOON...
WHAT DO WE DO, GREY?

I WISH I KNEW HOW MANY THERE ARE.
I'LL DRAW THEM INTO THE OPEN.
LEO--?!
LOOK, THERE'S JUST NO WAY. I CAN'T POSSIBLY LAST 220 HOURS...
I'VE STILL GOT A BULLET IN MY GUT.
LEO...
GET HOME ALIVE, NOVA!
PAH PAH

LEO!
TWO.

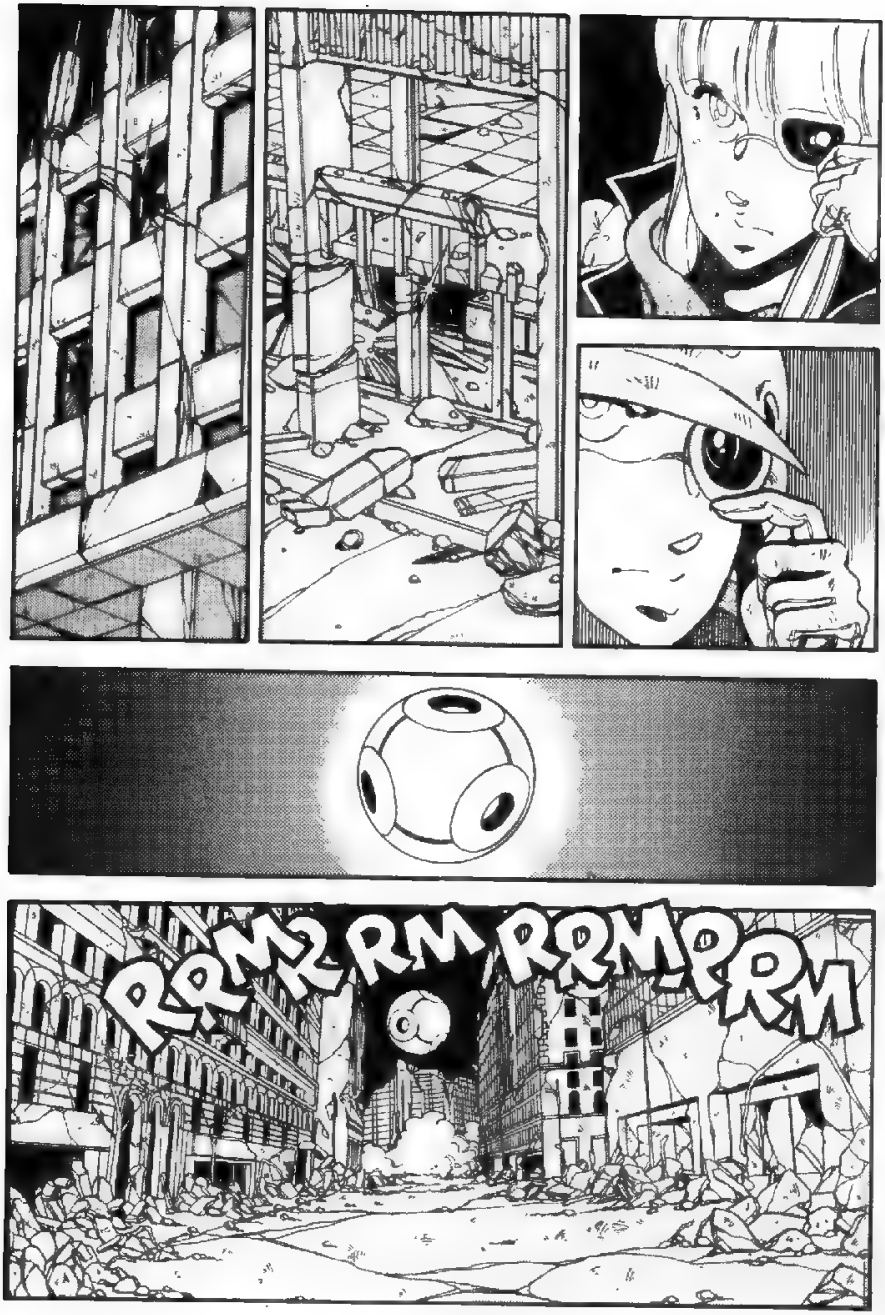
STAY DOWN, NOVA!
BABABABA
BKKKAKAK

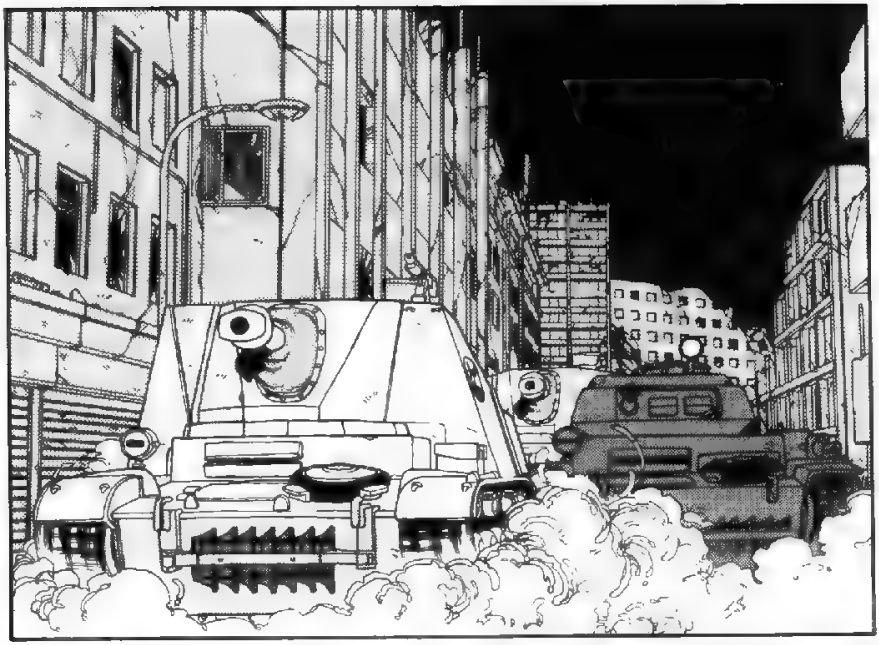
LIPS
KRAK!
KRAK!
KRAK!
LIPS
.....

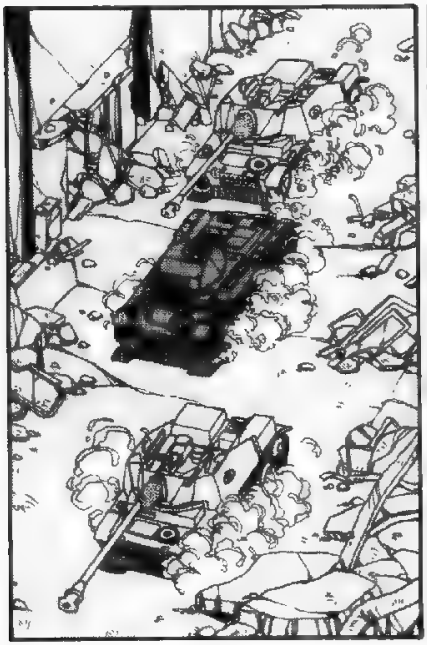
IF YOU WANT TO BURY HIM... I'LL HELP.

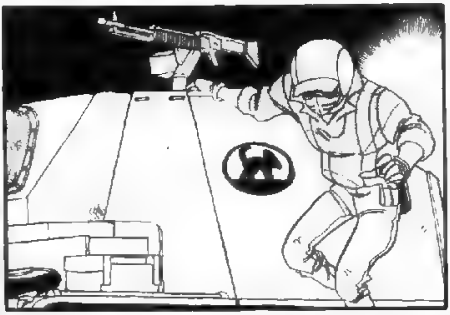
OH.
THUNK!
NO SOUND!
WHY?
HOW DO WE KNOW THE ENEMY ISN'T CAMPING HERE?
I HATE THIS GUY. HATE 'IM. HATE 'IM.
I WISH WE HAD A PORTABLE SENSOR, AT LEAST. THERE WAS ONE ON HAWK'S TANK...
IT'S A GAMBLE.
IS THIS THE ONLY WAY?
PROBABLY.
I... DON'T WANT TO DIE.

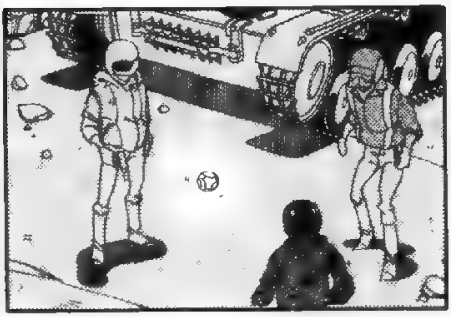
ME NEITHER.
KREEE
TAKE THAT BUILDING ON THE RIGHT.
AIM ONLY AT THE SELF-PROPELLED GUNS. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE COMMAND TANK.
Kyuuuu
Kyuuuu
OKAY.
Kyuuuu
Kyuuuu
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP


RRMRRMRRMRRM









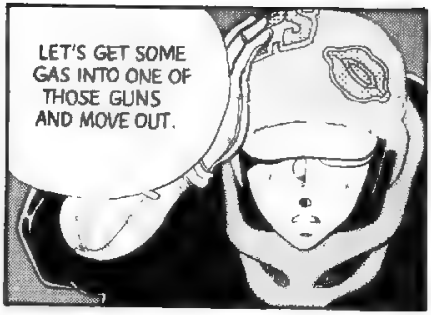
HEY!
BOM
DO
DO
DO

PA PA PA PA PA PA
SKWEEEEE
A
A
WOOM
A

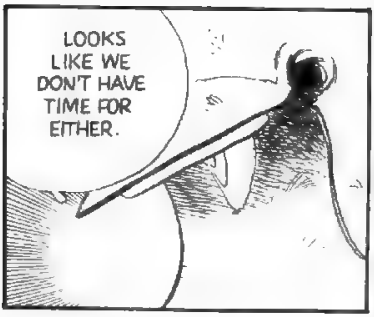
БЁВО
ИИ

HUH?
GREY!
GOOD JOB.
HOW'S YOUR WOUND?

IT HURTS.
IT SHOULD.


LET'S GET SOME GAS INTO ONE OF THOSE GUNS AND MOVE OUT.

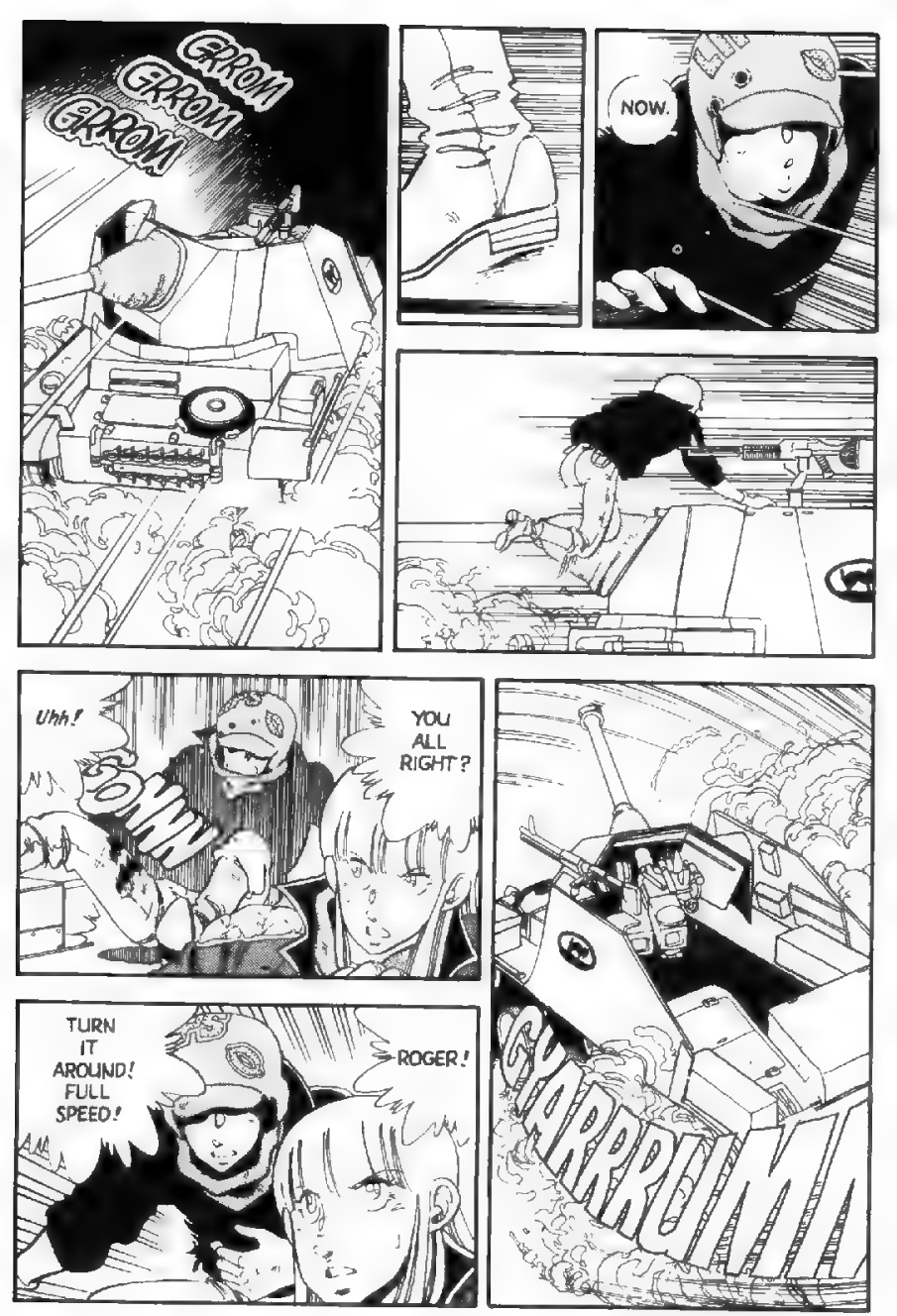
YOU SHOULD AT LEAST STOP THE BLEEDING FIRST.

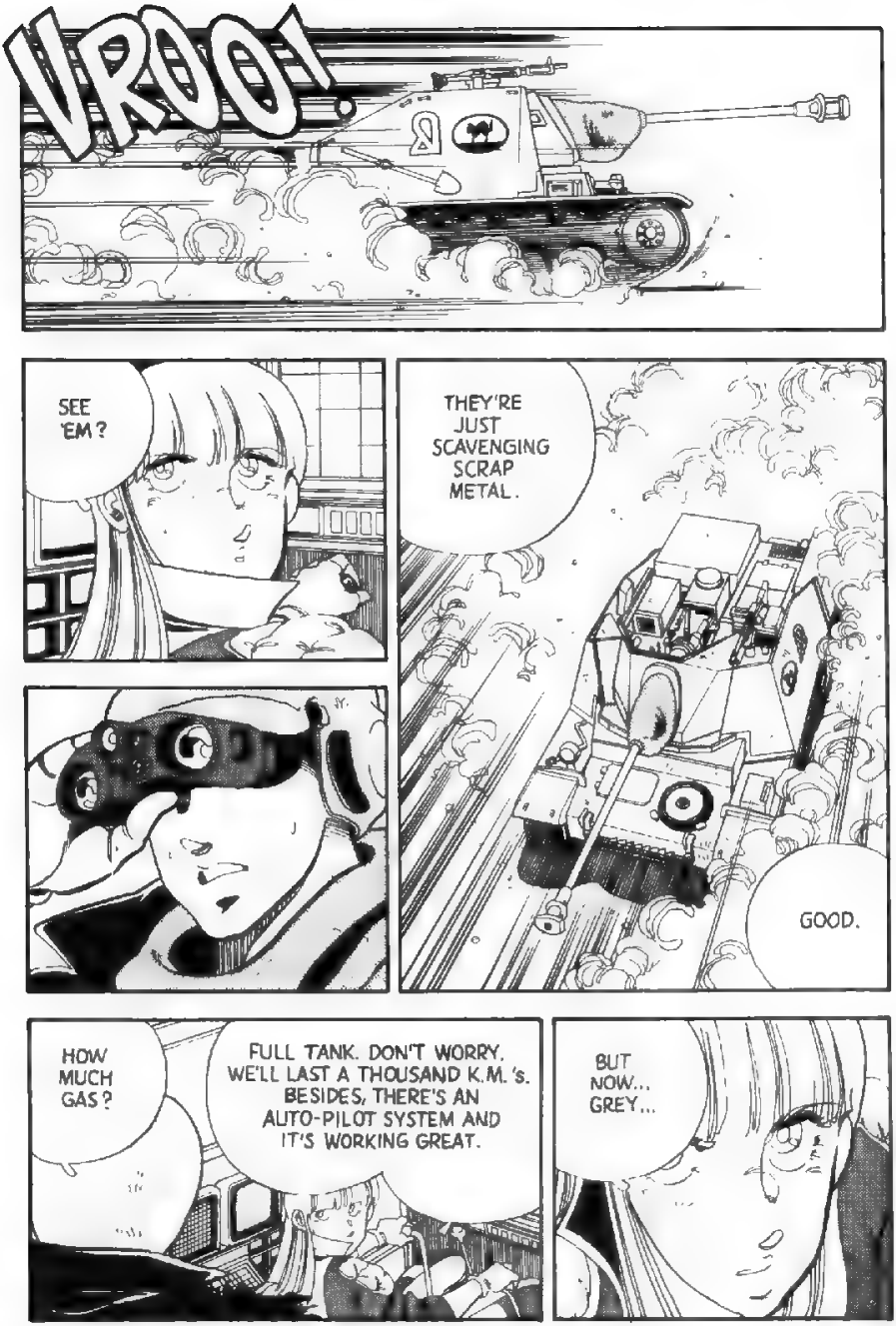

LOOKS LIKE WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR EITHER.

WHAT--?

SHOE REPAIR
Mia's
COFFEE SHOP

SCAVENGERS...
THE RESISTANCE?
GET ON THE SELF-PROPELLED GUN.
QUIETLY. DON'T TURN THE GUN TOWARD THEM.
THEY DON'T GET ANY SUPPLIES, SO...
WILL THEY ATTACK US?
OKAY.
ONCE YOU'RE ON, BACK IT UP SLOW.
GRRM GRRM
.....

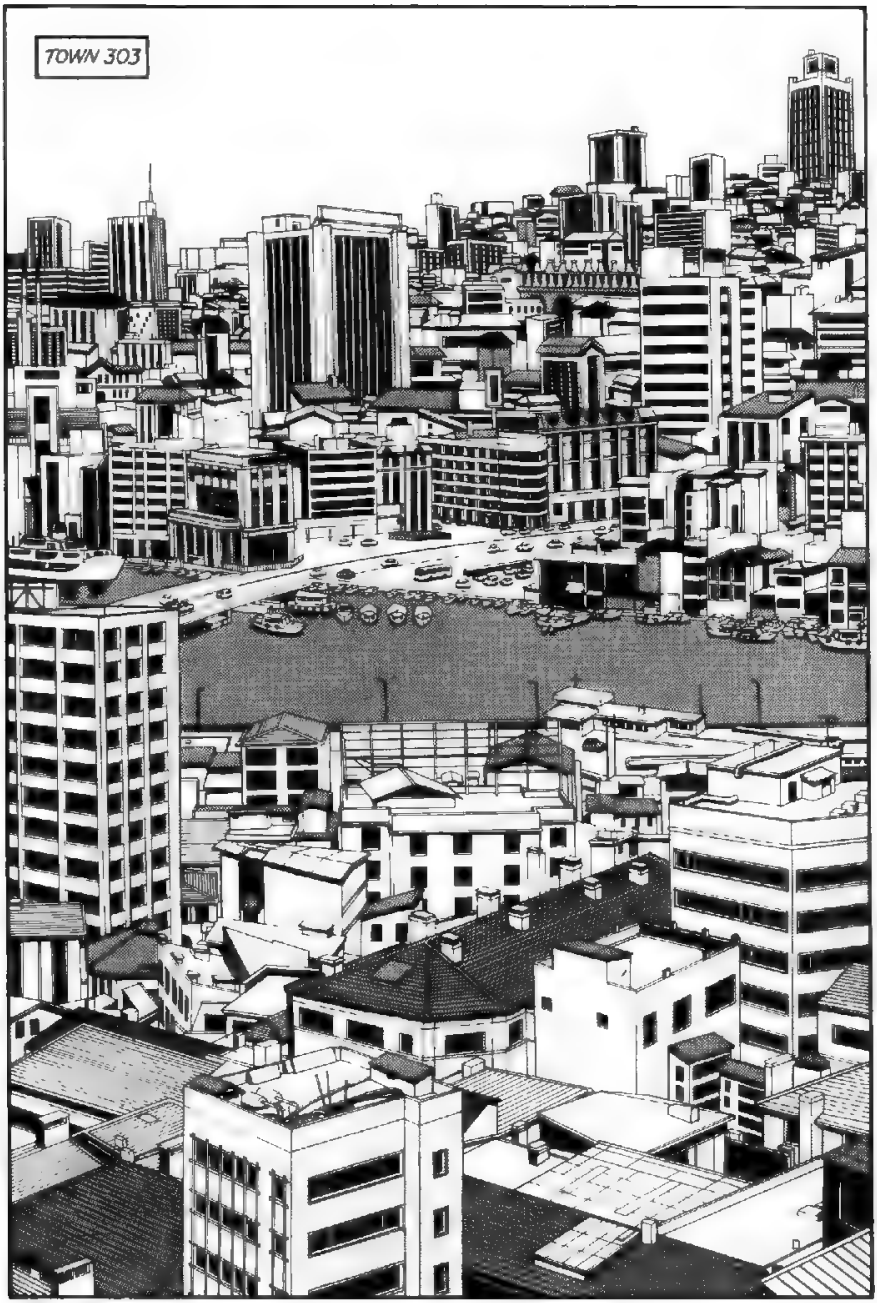

GROOM
GROOM
GROOM
NOW.
Uhh!
SOMM
YOU ALL RIGHT?
TURN IT AROUND! FULL SPEED!
ROGER!
GARRRUMM

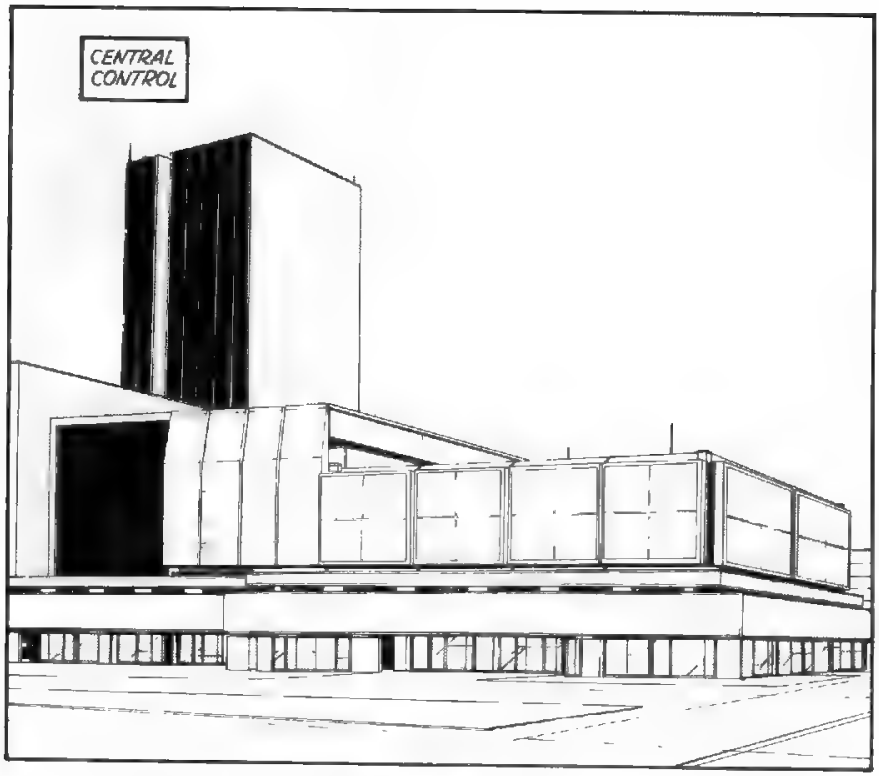

VROO!
SEE 'EM?
THEY'RE JUST SCAVENGING SCRAP METAL.
GOOD.
HOW MUCH GAS?
FULL TANK. DON'T WORRY. WE'LL LAST A THOUSAND K.M.'s. BESIDES, THERE'S AN AUTO-PILOT SYSTEM AND IT'S WORKING GREAT.
BUT NOW... GREY...

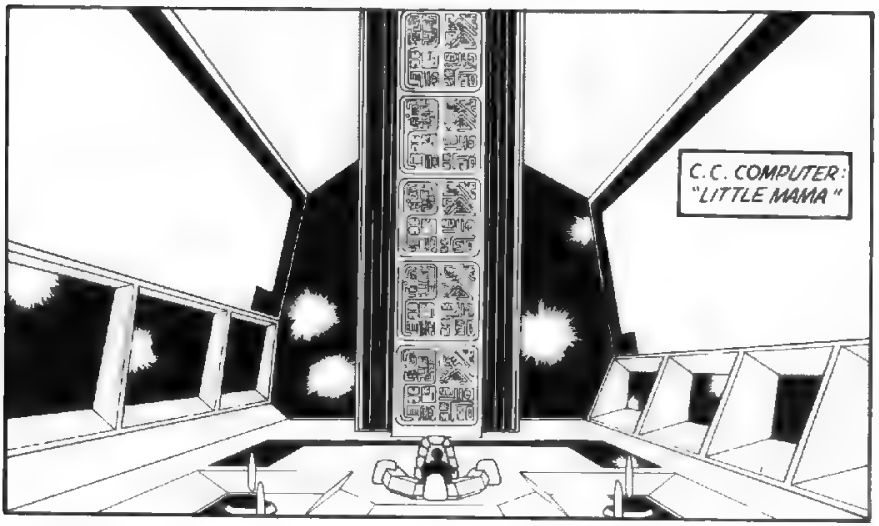
WE'VE GOT TO TAKE CARE OF THAT WOUND.
YOU CAN MAKE IT BACK BY YOURSELF NOW.
TRUE.
GREY...
WHO IS THIS "LIPS"?
...MY GIRL.

IS SHE DEAD?
BANG.
SO... YOU FEEL LIKE BREAKFAST? I COULD PROBABLY DIG YOU UP SOME BACON AND EGGS. WHAT D'YA SAY?
SOUNDS GOOD.
AND MAYBE I CAN FIND YOU A GRAPEFRUIT ORCHARD.
DON'T FORGET THE ORANGE JUICE.

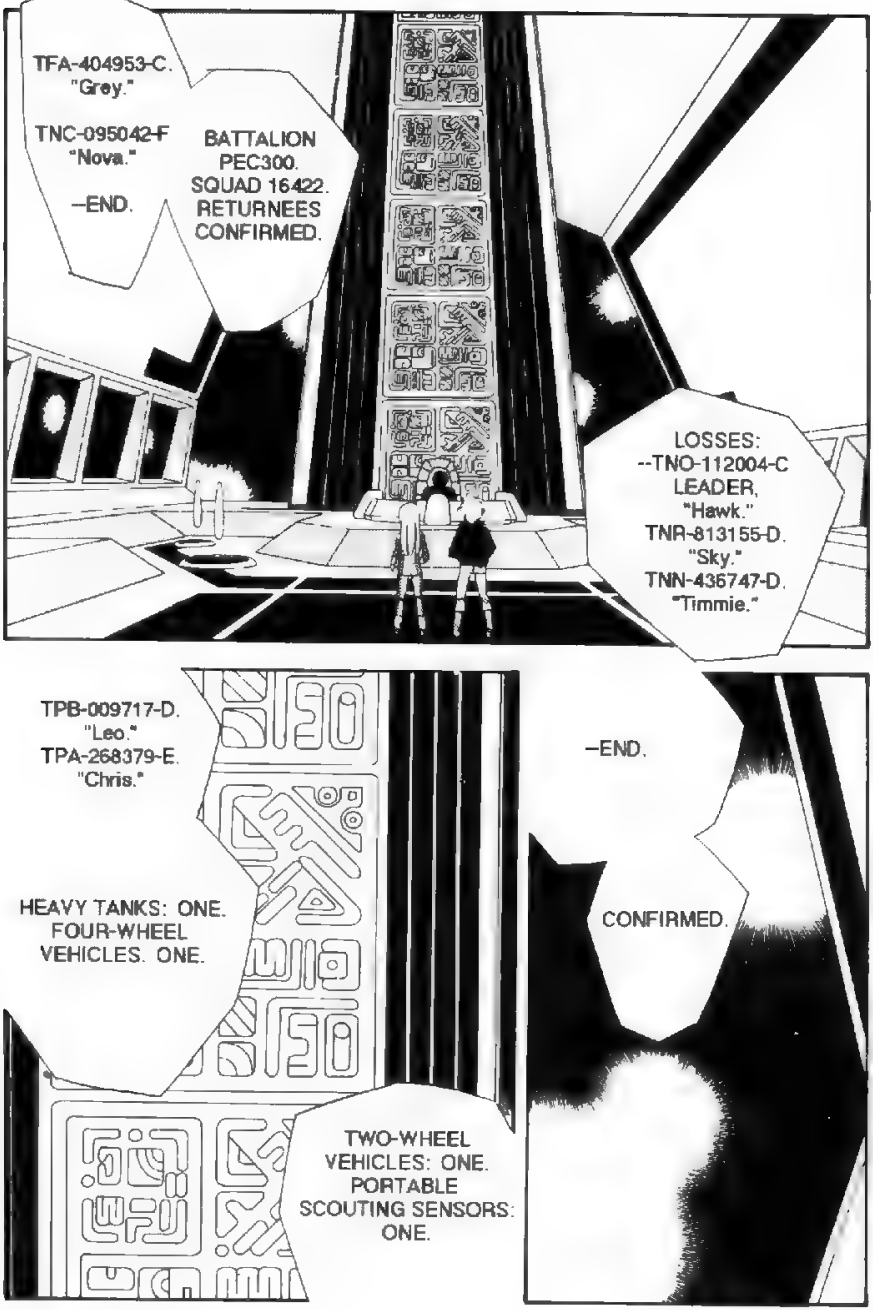
Approach Two: R & R

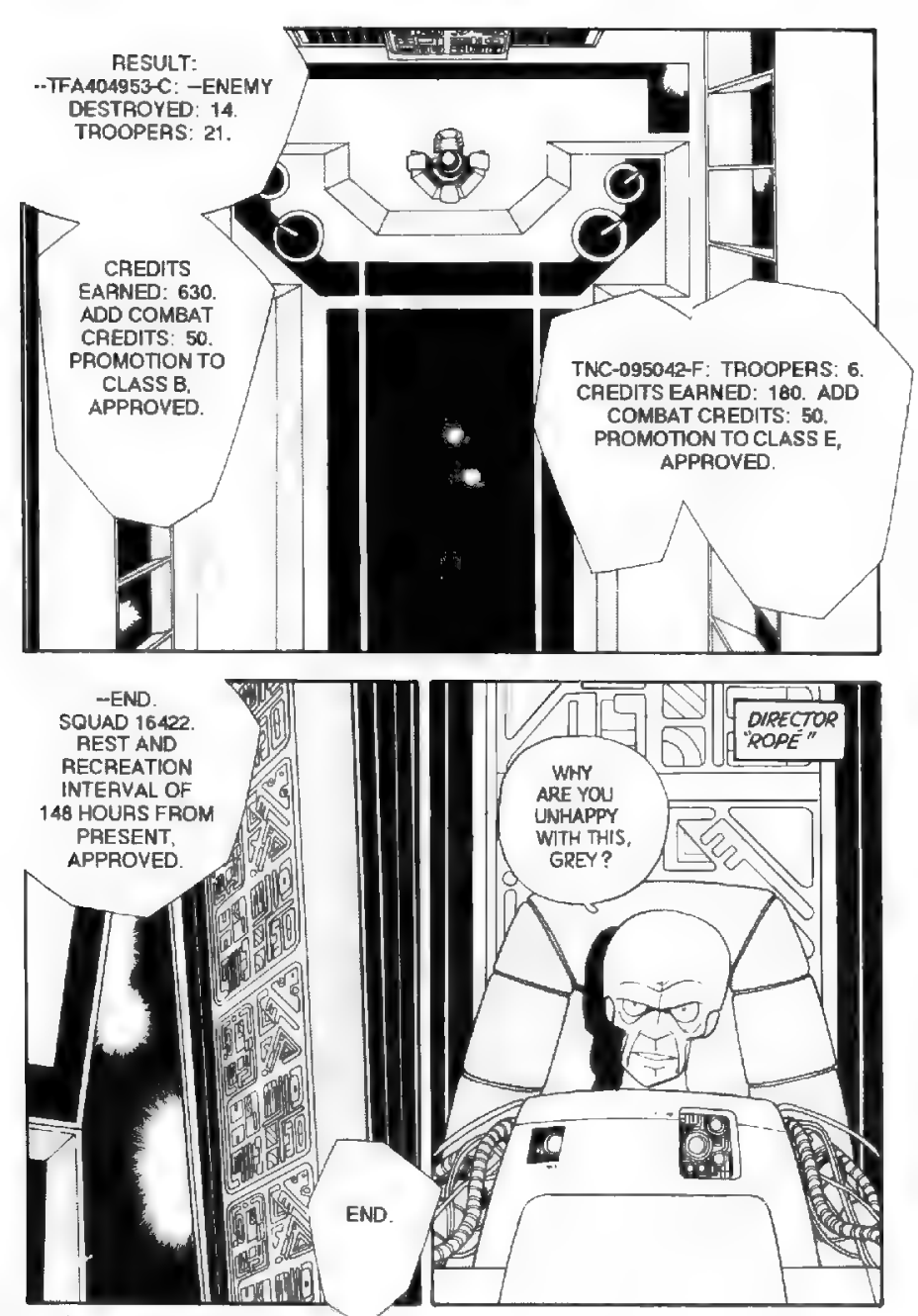

TOWN 303

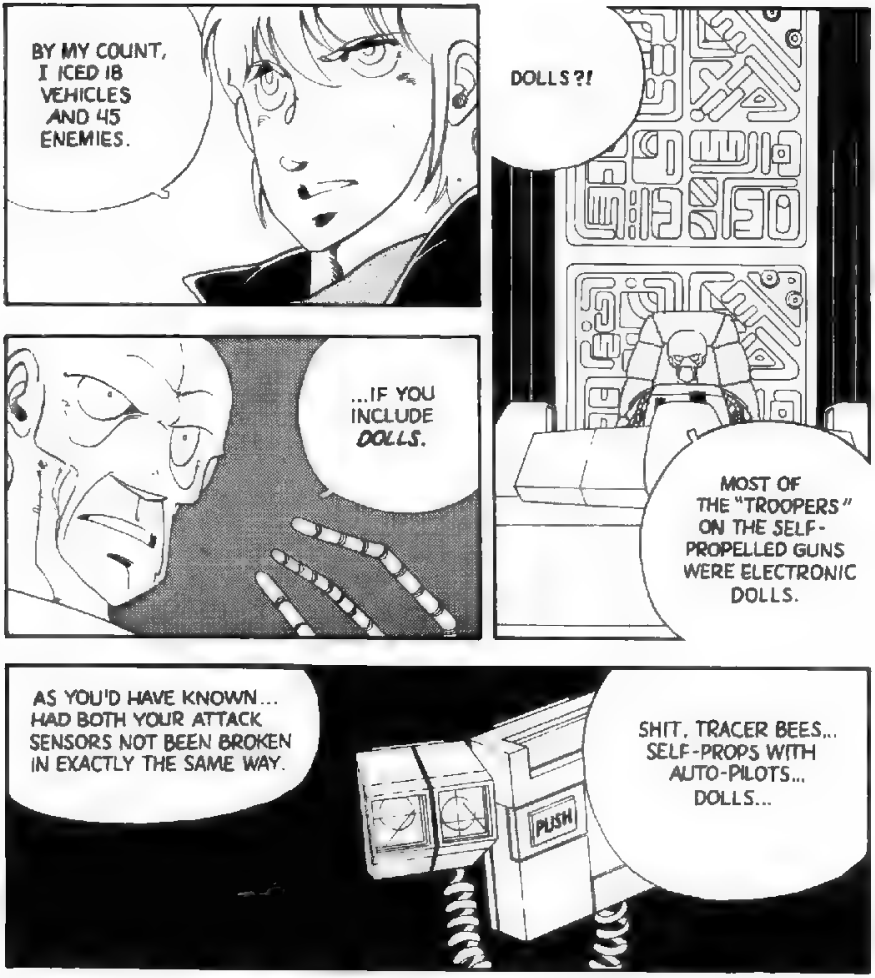

CENTRAL CONTROL

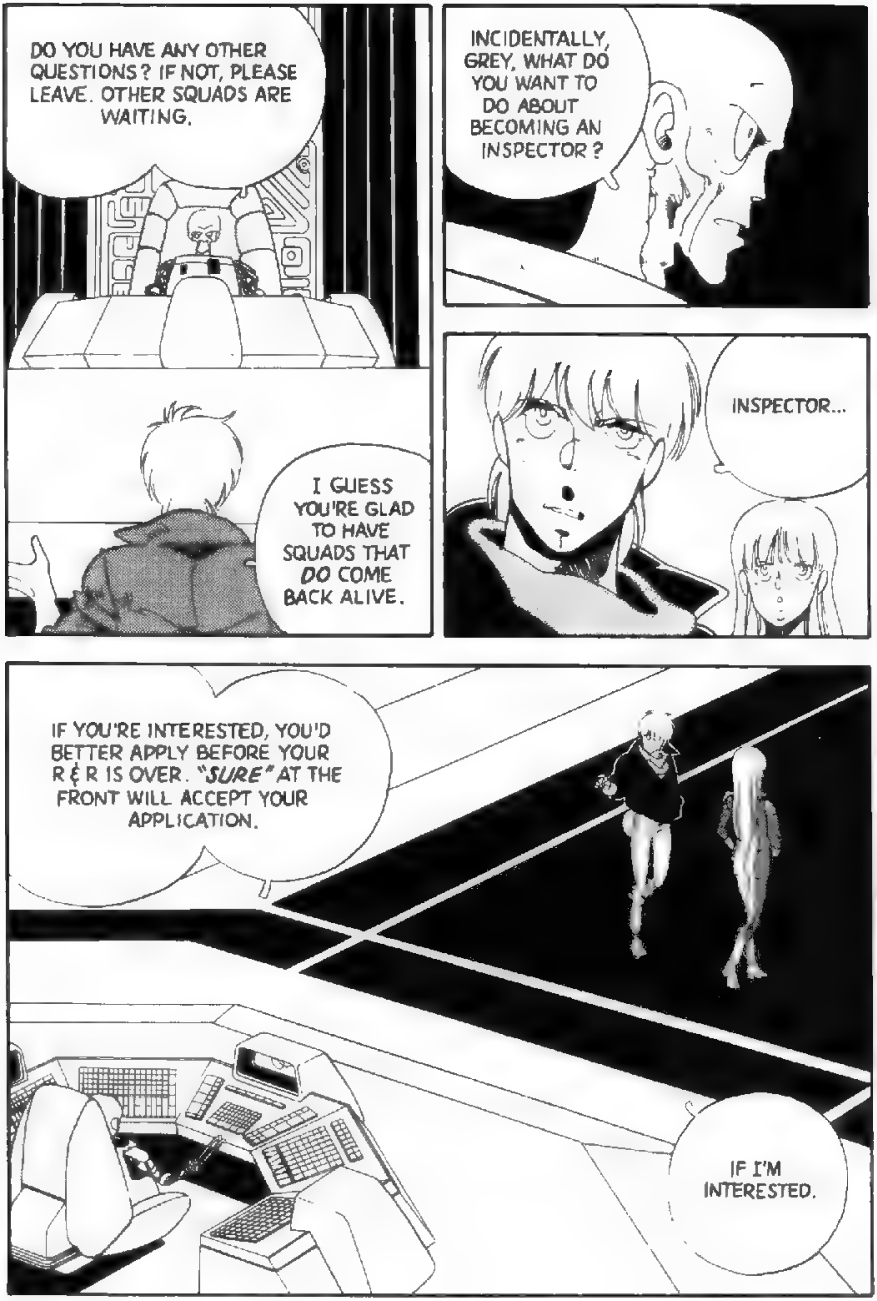

C.C. COMPUTER: "LITTLE MAMA"

WHY?
WHY?!
SORRY, BUT... COULD YOU TELL US AGAIN, MAMA?
REQUEST: REPEAT. FOLLOWS:


TFA-404953-C.
"Grey."
TNC-095042-F
"Nova."
—END.
BATTALION
PEC300.
SQUAD 16422.
RETURNEES
CONFIRMED.
LOSSES:
--TNO-112004-C
LEADER,
"Hawk."
TNR-813155-D.
"Sky."
TNN-436747-D.
"Timmie."
TPB-009717-D.
"Leo."
TPA-268379-E.
"Chris."
HEAVY TANKS: ONE.
FOUR-WHEEL
VEHICLES. ONE.
TWO-WHEEL
VEHICLES: ONE.
PORTABLE
SCOUTING SENSORS:
ONE.
—END.
CONFIRMED.


RESULT:
--TFA404953-C: --ENEMY DESTROYED: 14. TROOPERS: 21.
CREDITS EARNED: 630. ADD COMBAT CREDITS: 50. PROMOTION TO CLASS B, APPROVED.
TNC-095042-F: TROOPERS: 6. CREDITS EARNED: 180. ADD COMBAT CREDITS: 50. PROMOTION TO CLASS E, APPROVED.
--END. SQUAD 16422. REST AND RECREATION INTERVAL OF 148 HOURS FROM PRESENT, APPROVED.
END.
DIRECTOR "ROPE"
WHY ARE YOU UNHAPPY WITH THIS, GREY?


BY MY COUNT, I ICED 18 VEHICLES AND 45 ENEMIES.
DOLLS?!
...IF YOU INCLUDE DOLLS.
MOST OF THE "TROOPERS" ON THE SELF-PROPELLED GUNS WERE ELECTRONIC DOLLS.
AS YOU'D HAVE KNOWN... HAD BOTH YOUR ATTACK SENSORS NOT BEEN BROKEN IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY.
PUSH
SHIT. TRACER BEES... SELF-PROPS WITH AUTO-PILOTS... DOLLS...
THAT WAS ONE WELL-EQUIPPED SQUAD.
WHICH TOWN WERE THEY FROM?
TOWN 15.

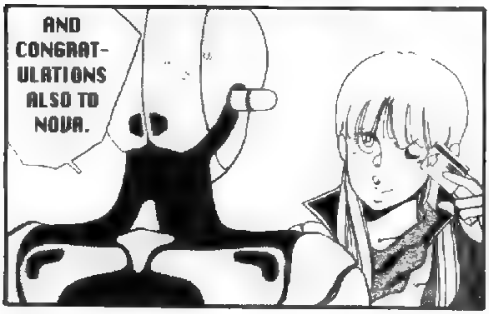

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS? IF NOT, PLEASE LEAVE. OTHER SQUADS ARE WAITING.
I GUESS YOU'RE GLAD TO HAVE SQUADS THAT DO COME BACK ALIVE.
INCIDENTALLY, GREY, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO ABOUT BECOMING AN INSPECTOR?
INSPECTOR...
IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, YOU'D BETTER APPLY BEFORE YOUR R & R IS OVER. "SURE" AT THE FRONT WILL ACCEPT YOUR APPLICATION.
IF I'M INTERESTED.

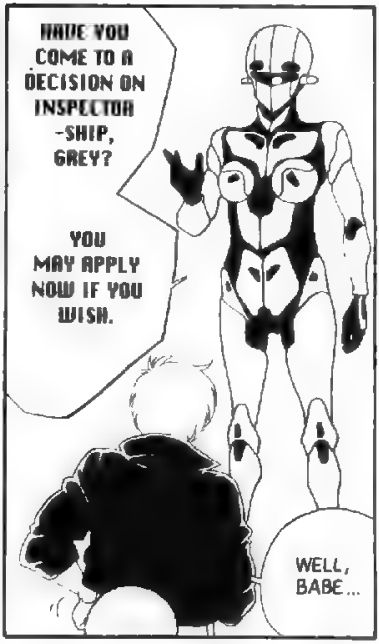
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
ANSWER ME, GREY!
ABOUT WHAT?
WHAT ROPÉ WAS TALKING ABOUT. BECOMING AN INSPECTOR.
DON'T KNOW.
INSPECTORS DO A FIVE-YEAR GIG. AFTER THAT, YOU QUALIFY FOR *CITIZENSHIP*.
LONG TIME, FIVE YEARS.

BUT...
HELLO, GREY.
HIYA SURE.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PROMOTION TO CLASS B.
INFORMATION DOLL "SURE"

THANKS.


AND CONGRAT-ULATIONS ALSO TO NOVA.


HAVE YOU COME TO A DECISION ON INSPECTOR -SHIP, GREY?
YOU MAY APPLY NOW IF YOU WISH.
WELL, BABE...

I GOTTA BLOW YOU OFF THIS TIME. NEED TO THINK.
I WILL AWAIT YOUR DECISION, GREY.
HAVE A NICE INTERVAL.
SURE... SURE.
I UNDERSTAND.
SHHHH
I MEAN, SHE'S JUST A DOLL, FOR GOD'S SAKE! WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS?
JEALOUS?
I DON'T LIKE HER.

OH, FOR... WHY SHOULD I BE JEALOUS OF A DOLL?
YOU TELL ME.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WAS TALKING TO HER LIKE A HUMAN BEING. "THANKS, SURE."
BUT DID YOU EVER THANK ME? HELL NO!
IF NOT FOR ME, YOU'D STILL BE STUCK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT AND--
WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WALK HOME, ARE YOU? DON'T YOU EVEN HAVE CREDITS FOR AN AIR-TAXI OR--
I HAVE A CAR. THIS WAY.

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME YOU HAD A CAR EARLIER?
YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME MUCH CHANCE.
GREY
LIPS
LIPS
GOD DAMN, BUT YOU'RE A COLD FISH.
YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS? YOU'RE TOO LACONIC.
YOU DON'T TALK ENOUGH. DON'T YOU THINK SO?
BROOM
LIPS
NO.
SORRY.

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN SO TIGHT-LIPPED?
WHAT ABOUT WHEN LIPS WAS ALIVE?
PROBABLY.
I DOUBT IT.
IN FACT, I DON'T THINK SO.
YOU'RE GUESSING.
IF YOU DON'T WANT ME GUESSING, WHY DON'T YOU *TALK* TO ME?
TOO MUCH TROUBLE
YOU'RE HOPELESS.
VOOM
LIPS

IS THIS IT?
IS THIS...
...IS THIS REALLY...
...YOUR ROOM?
UH-HUH.
SOMETHING WRONG WITH IT?

IT WOULDN'T BE WRONG...
COWARDLY, GLOOMY, SPIRITLESS *PEOPLE*... JUST WORKING FOR A FEW COINS A DAY... EATING, SLEEPING...
MAYBE I'M COWARDLY AND GLOOMY TOO.
IF IT WERE A HOVEL FOR "*PEOPLE*."
COME ON, GREY, YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN. AFTER ALL, A TROOPER SHOULD LIVE LIKE A TROOPER DESERVES.
IT'S TRUE. WE TROOPERS ARE GIVEN CREDITS FOR A REASON!
WE NEED THE WILL TO BECOME CITIZENS--TO GIVE OUR ALL IN COMBAT--AND IN OUR R&R INTERVALS WE HAVE TO HEAL OUR WOUNDS, BUILD UP THE ENERGY TO GO BACK TO BATTLE. THAT'S WHY THEY PAY US LIKE THEY DO.

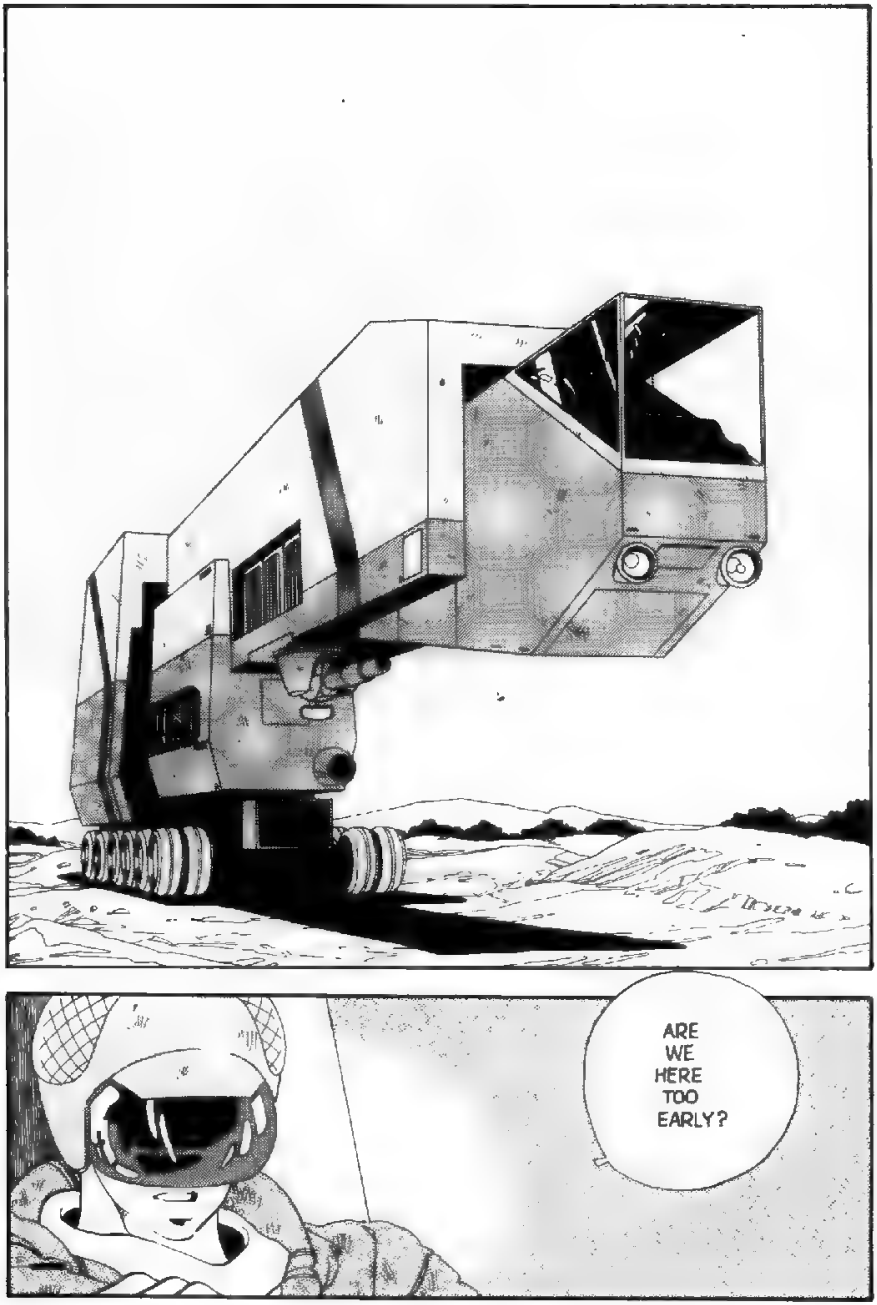
HUH. IS THAT SO?
YES, THAT'S SO!
LET'S GO TO MY PLACE. IT STINKS IN HERE.
.....
Sniff Sniff

HOW ABOUT THIS, GREY?
THIS IS HOW A TROOPER LIVES!
Hmm...
I DON'T THINK I COULD GET USED TO IT.
OH, YOU'LL GET USED TO IT SOON ENOUGH.
YOU WANT A DRINK?
BEER, COGNAC, BOURBON...
COGNAC.

ANYWAY... I HAD NO IDEA THOSE TROOPERS WERE DOLLS.
IF THEY'D ALL BEEN REAL, I'D HAVE HAD NINE KILLS...
FWAP
TOWN 15.
ANY IDEA WHERE THAT IS?
I DON'T KNOW.
ISN'T IT IN THE WEST?
YEAH, I REMEMBER... HAWK TOLD ME THAT MOST OF THE TOWNS WITH LOW NUMBERS ARE OUT THERE... OUT WEST.
FUNNY.

HOW SO?
THERE'S TOO MUCH DIFFERENCE IN HOW WELL-ARMED THE TOWNS ARE.
THREE OPERATIONS AGO, I HIT A SQUAD THAT DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A DAMNED TANK.
THEY MUST HAVE HAD TOO MANY TROOPERS IN THAT TOWN.
MAYBE. BUT PUT THEM UP AGAINST THE SQUAD FROM TOWN 15... IT WAS A MIRACLE EVEN FOR US TO GET OUR ASSES OUT OF THERE IN ONE PIECE.
LISTEN... THE "LITTLE MAMA" IN EVERY TOWN IS A TERMINAL FOR "BIG MAMA" IN THE CITY, RIGHT?
OKAY, EVEN IF THE POPULATIONS AREN'T THE SAME, EVERY TOWN'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE THE SAME PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY, RIGHT? WHY THESE BIG DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TOWNS THAT ARE ALL RUN BY THE SAME MOTHER-BRAIN?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

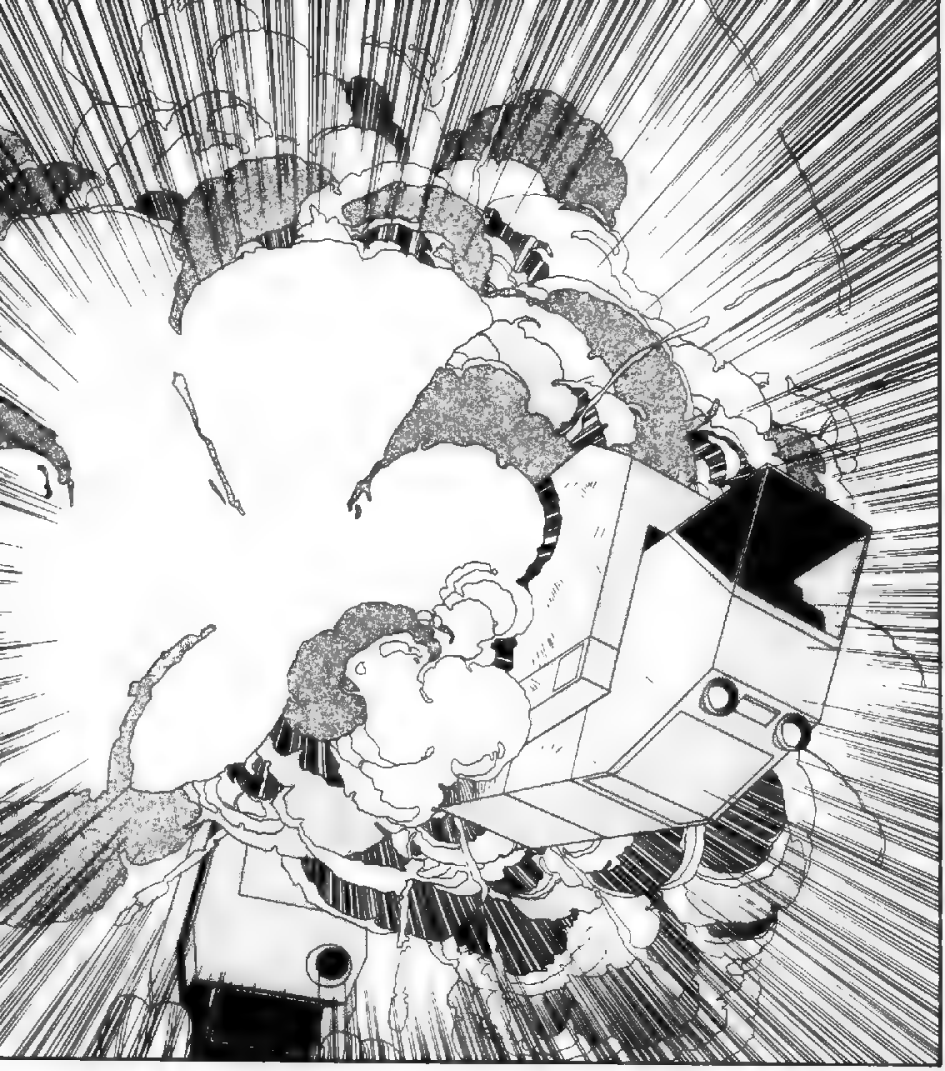
GREY...?
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A SHOWER? OKAY?
WHY?
HEY, DON'T PLAY DUMB!
MY WOUND HASN'T CLOSED YET.
THEN MAYBE YOU SHOULD CLOSE MY WOUND, GREY.
Hmm.

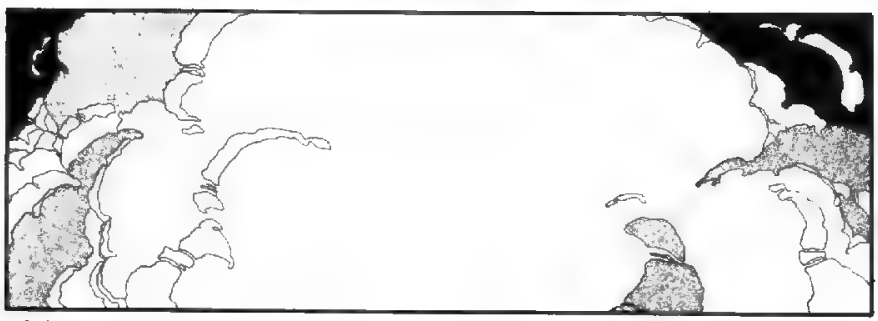

ARE WE HERE TOO EARLY?

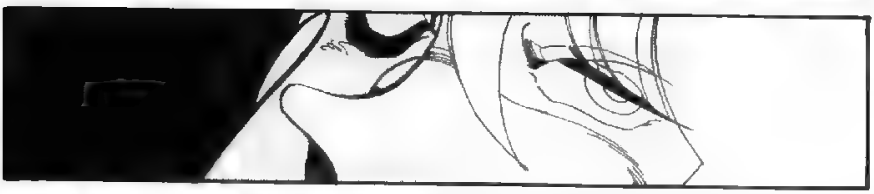
THAT'S FINE... THE SQUAD-LEADER FOR 20359 IS BOSCH. THEY WON'T BE A TOTAL WIPE.
BY THE WAY...
I HEARD GREY FINALLY MADE CLASS B.
IMPRESSIVE SON OF A BITCH. DESERVES TO BE CALLED "DEATH."
IS HE GOING TO BE AN INSPECTOR?
I ADVISED HIM TO APPLY, BUT...
DEATH'S JOB IS TO KILL PEOPLE... RIGHT?
RED.
IS IT BOSCH?

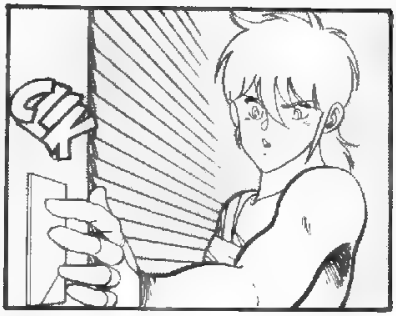
NO. IT'S NOT HIM.
THEY'RE...
SURVIVORS OF ANOTHER SQUAD?
THEY'RE *RESISTANCE*, RED.
THEY HAVE A TANK.
WOULD THEY ATTACK?
IMPOSSIBLE
THEY DON'T HAVE THE BALLS.

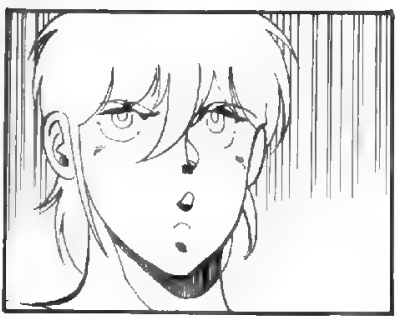
ROCKET INCOMING!
DAMN!
OPEN THE HANGAR, CRICKET! I'LL USE THE TANK!
TOO LATE!
IT'S A DIRECT--



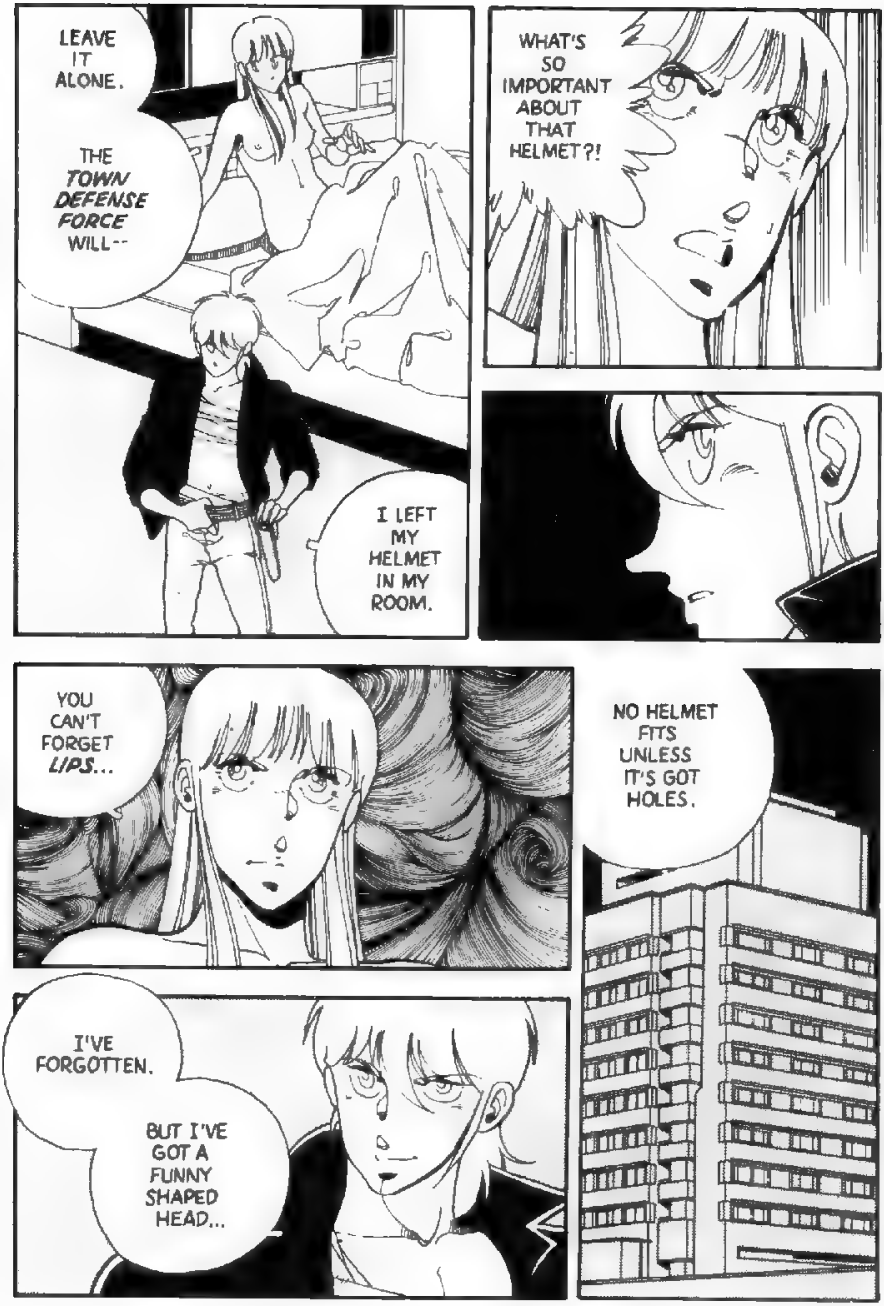





CLK



WHA...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, GREY?
BOMBING.
BOMBING? WHERE?
THE EAST SIDE. PAST RIVER 7. NEAR MY APARTMENT.
WHAT...
WAIT A MINUTE.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING.?

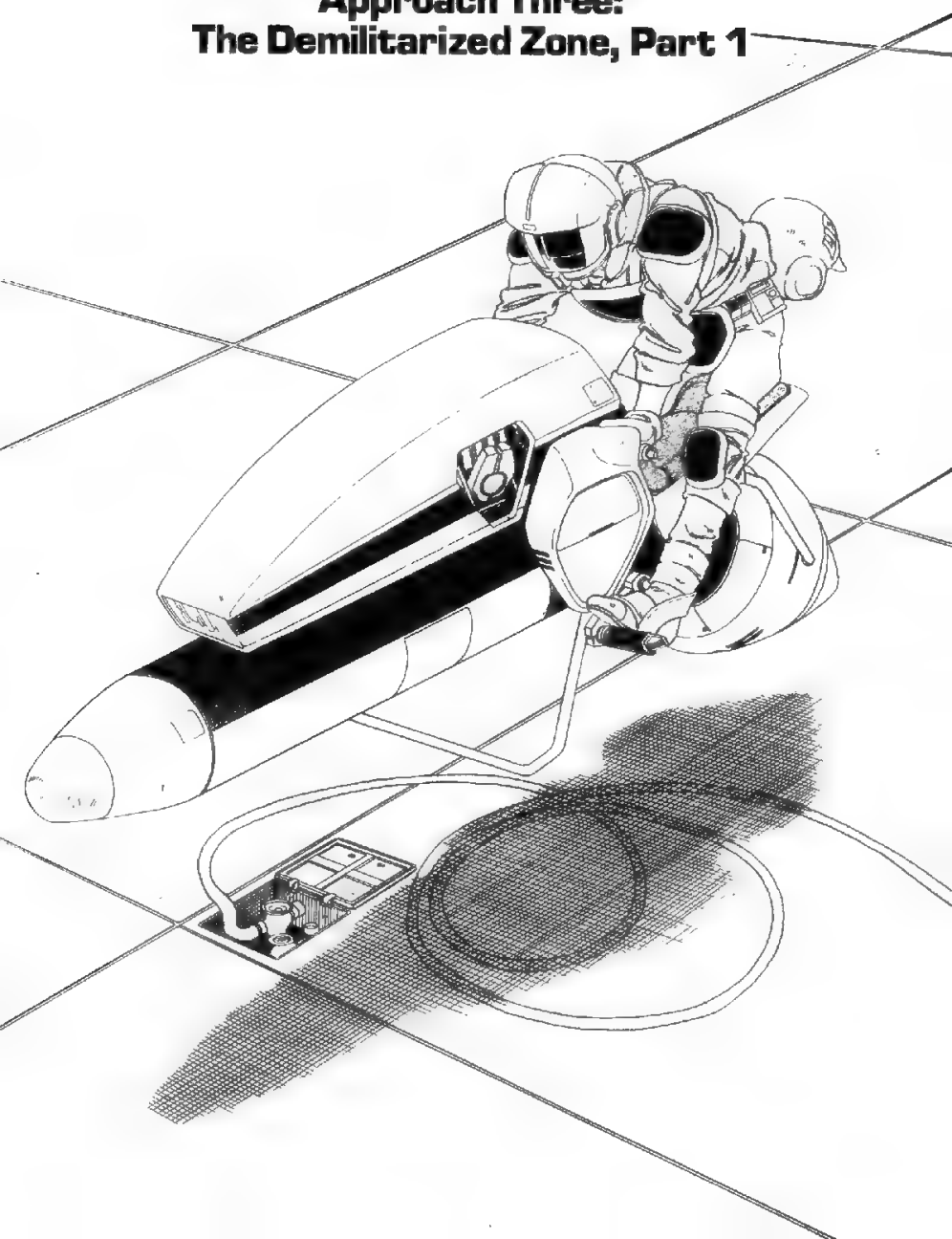

LEAVE IT ALONE.
THE TOWN DEFENSE FORCE WILL--
I LEFT MY HELMET IN MY ROOM.
WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT THAT HELMET?!
YOU CAN'T FORGET LIPS...
I'VE FORGOTTEN.
BUT I'VE GOT A FUNNY SHAPED HEAD...
NO HELMET FITS UNLESS IT'S GOT HOLES.

WELL...
K-KX
THEY DID A HELL OF A JOB.

SWAP
HUH?
FREEZE!
ARE YOU PEOPLE? I.D.!
TURN THAT OFF.
A TROOPER?!
WHAT'S A CLASS-B TROOPER DOING DOWN HERE?
WHICH TOWN IS THE ENEMY FROM?
NO TOWN. NOT THESE.
YOU MEAN...?

THE RESISTANCE... THEY'RE GETTING MORE AND MORE AGGRESSIVE.
NOW THEY'VE GOT TANKS.
BBBBR
GREY!
GREY, DO YOU READ ME?
I GOTCHA, NOVA.
I JUST GOT A REPORT.
RED WAS...
RED WAS WIPED, GREY...
...BY THE RESISTANCE!

Approach Three: The Demilitarized Zone, Part 1

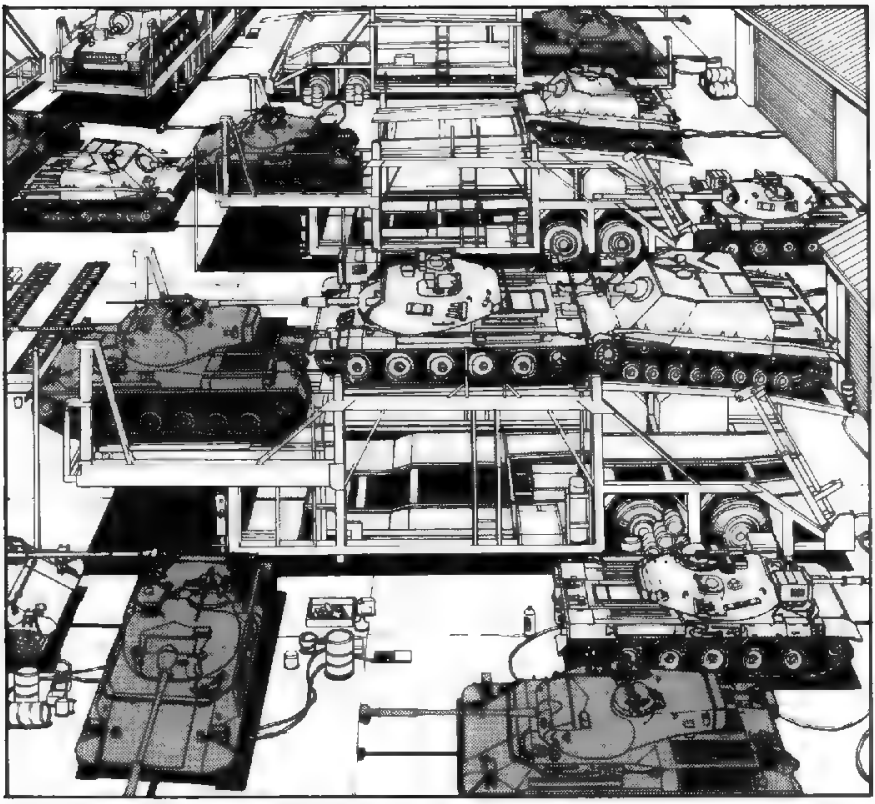


VRAM.
I DON'T KNOW.
LIPS
ROPÉ JUST TOLD ME RED HAD BEEN LOST.
MAMA WON'T SEE US, EVEN IF WE GO TO THE CENTER
LIPS

...BECAUSE THIS ISN'T PART OF OUR ASSIGNMENT.
AND IF MAMA WON'T SEE US, THEN ROPE WON'T EITHER.
GREY...
I'M BRINGING RED BACK.
BRINGING...? *HOW?!* DMZ S-44 IS IN *AFRICA!* HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET THERE? YOU REALLY ARE CRAZY.
HOOOSH
THINK ABOUT IT. HOW DO WE GET TO COMBAT ZONES?

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO STEAL A *BIRD?!* IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! *MAMA* CONTROLS ALL BIRDS!
THE BIG BIRDS THAT HAUL LAND-CARRIERS, MAYBE...
LIPS
BUT IF IT WERE ONE OF THE *LITTLE* BIRDS LIKE THE ONE RED SHOWED ME IN THE FACTORY THE OTHER DAY...
IMPOSSIBLE. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
FIRST OFF, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF RED IS STILL ALIVE...
WE DON'T KNOW IF HE'S DEAD, EITHER.
MAMA MAY SEND SOMEONE TO RESCUE HIM...
YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?

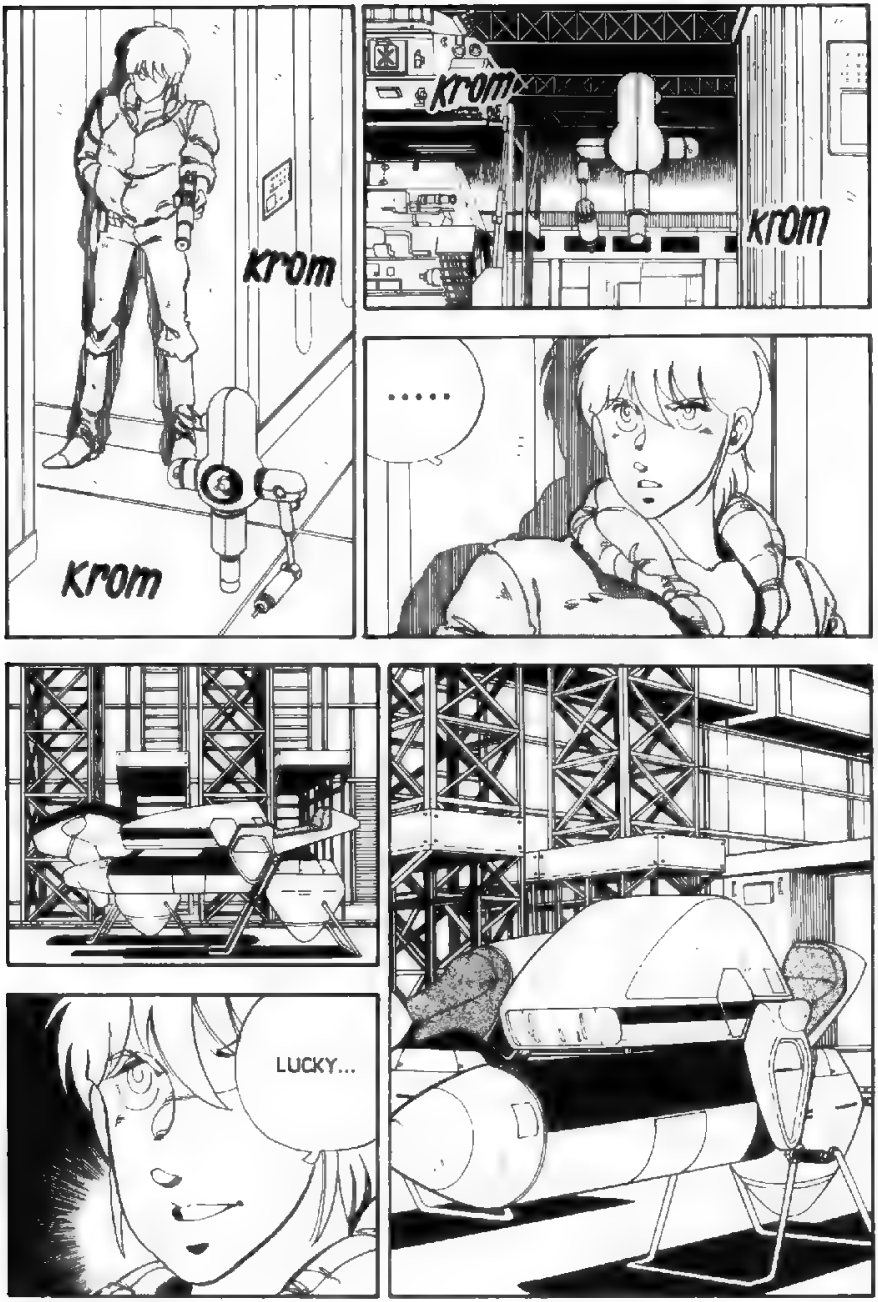
IF MAMA WERE SUCH A SWEETHEART, EVERYBODY IN THIS DAMN TOWN WOULD BE A *CITIZEN* BY NOW!
brom



EEEE
FOLLOW ME, NOVA!
THIS IS AGAINST REGULATIONS...
WE COULD GET BOOTED DOWN TO LOWER CLASSES, GREY.
SO GO HOME.
.....
RIGHT AFTER I MADE CLASS E, TOO...EVERYTHING I WENT THROUGH... JUST MY LUCK...
SHUT IT!

A BIRD...
POP THE LOCK ON IT. THEN *WAIT.*
I'LL GET ESCAPE-BAGS AND AIR-BIKES.
DON'T GET NAILED BY ANY *GUARD-MECHS.*
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
SAME TO YOU.

SQUIK
WHEW...
krom
krom
krom
krom
krom


krom
krom
krom
krom
.....
LUCKY...

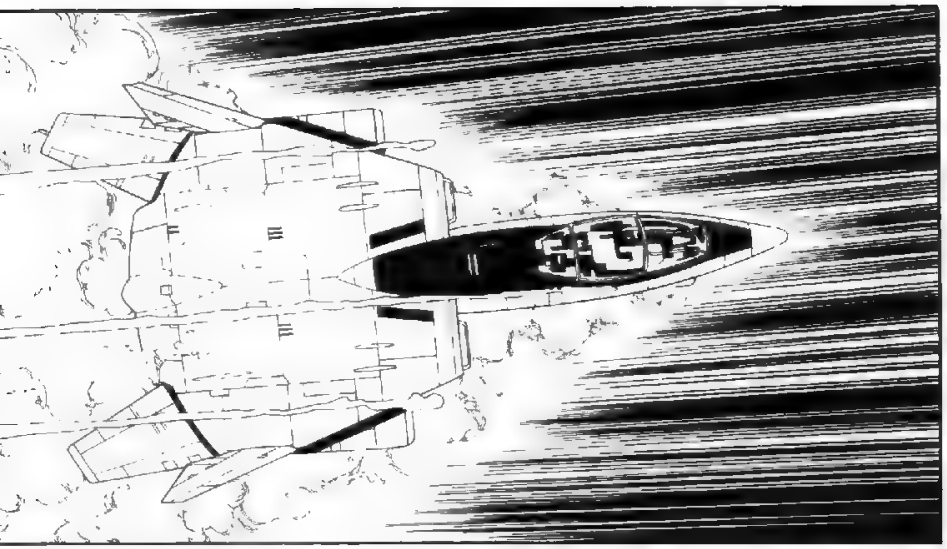
NO WAY.
"POP THE LOCK," HE SAYS. JUST "POP THE LOCK." LIKE IT'S NOTHING. LIKE...OUCH!
NOT THAT EASY.
I MEAN, THE WHOLE IDEA OF A LOCK IS THAT IT'S HARD TO OPEN, RIGHT?
NNNNGH!
NO WAY...

HURRY BACK, GREY...
STATE YOUR BUSINESS.
GUARD-MECH!
KLIK
BA-GOOOM

THAT IDIOT!
ZEEEEEEEEE
NOVA! START THE BIRD!

BUT I DIDN'T POP THE LOCK YET!
SCREW THE LOCK! JUST START IT!
OKAY. BUT WHATEVER HAPPENS ISN'T MY FAULT!
GO!!
BOOM

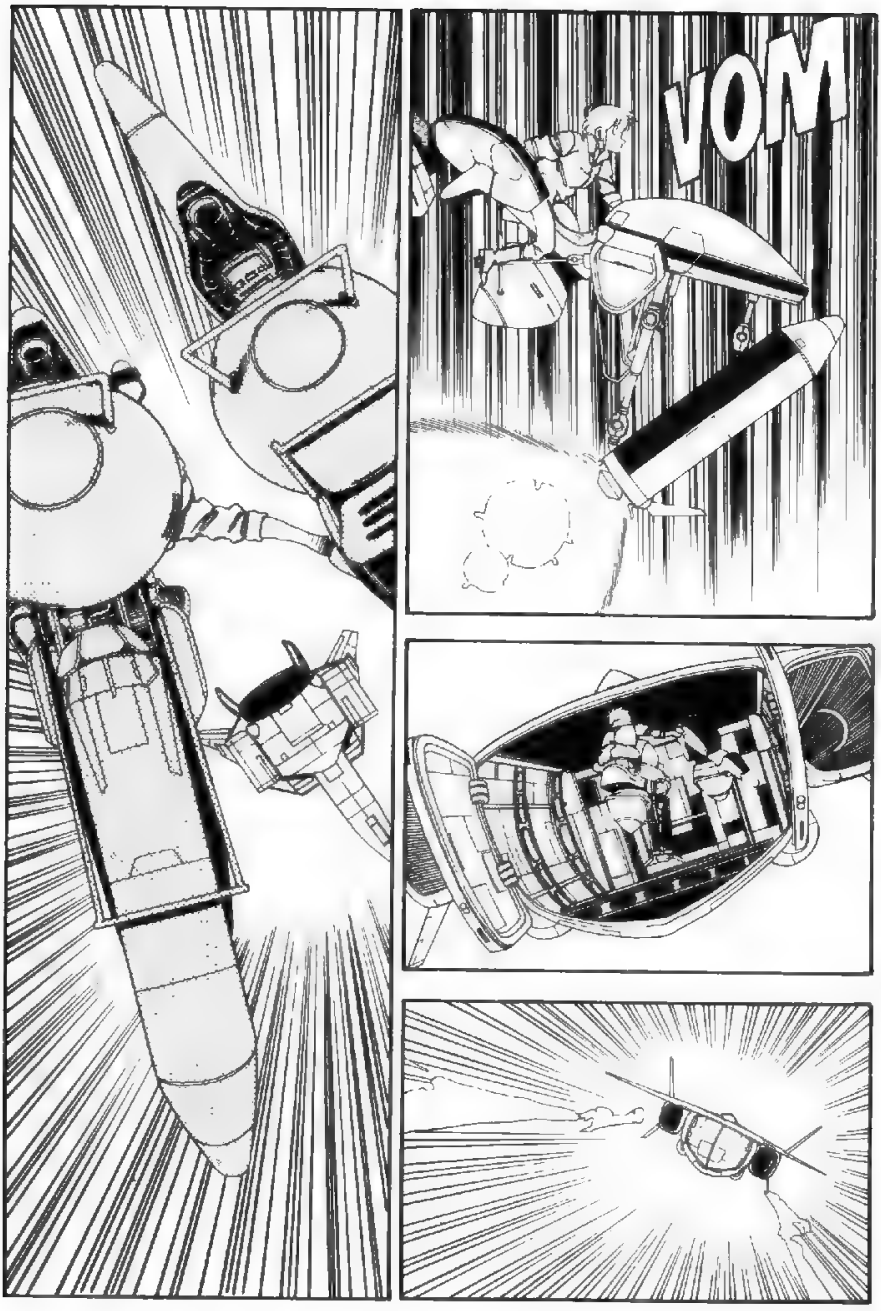
K-K-K-KRAK



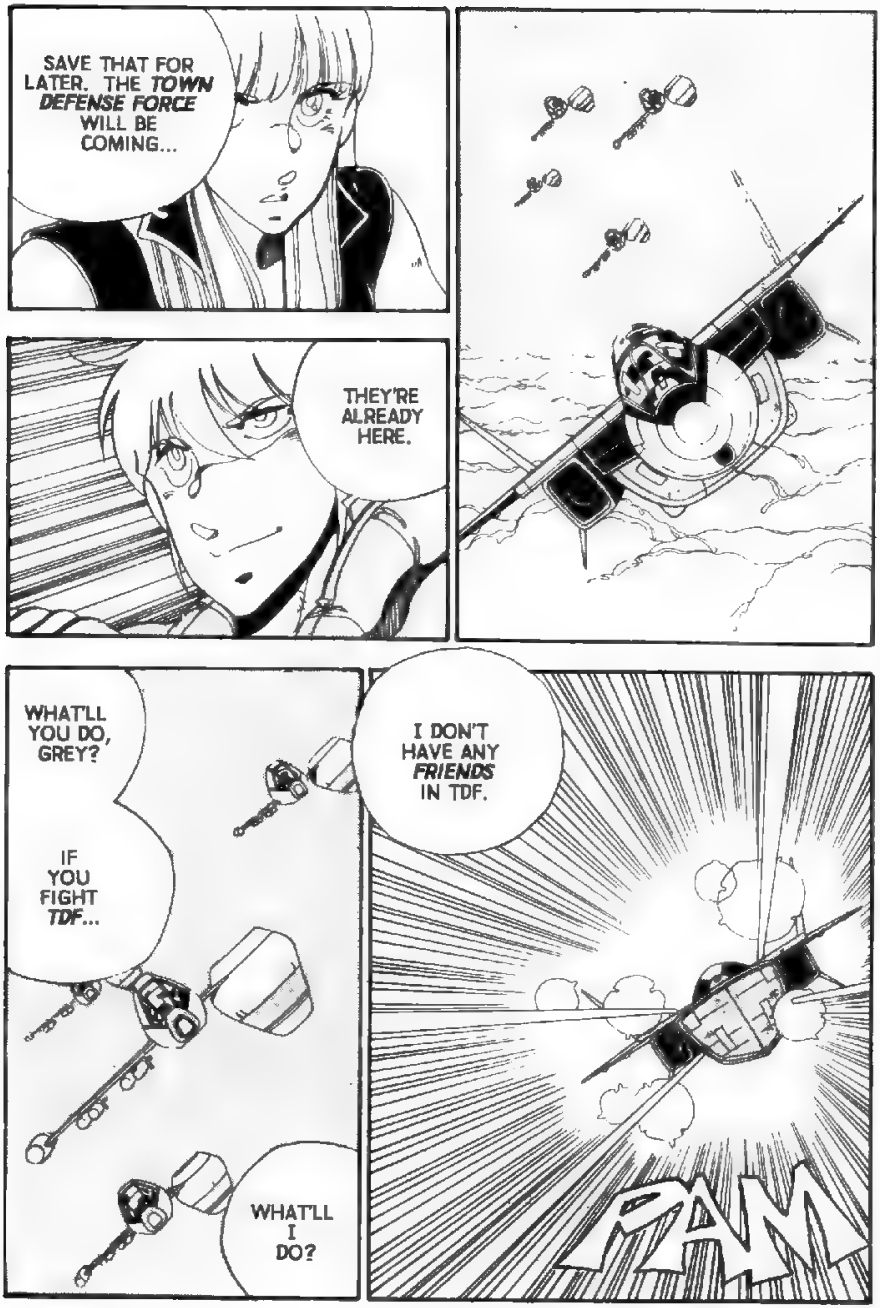
OPEN YOUR *REAR!* I'M COMING *IN!*

NASTY BOY!

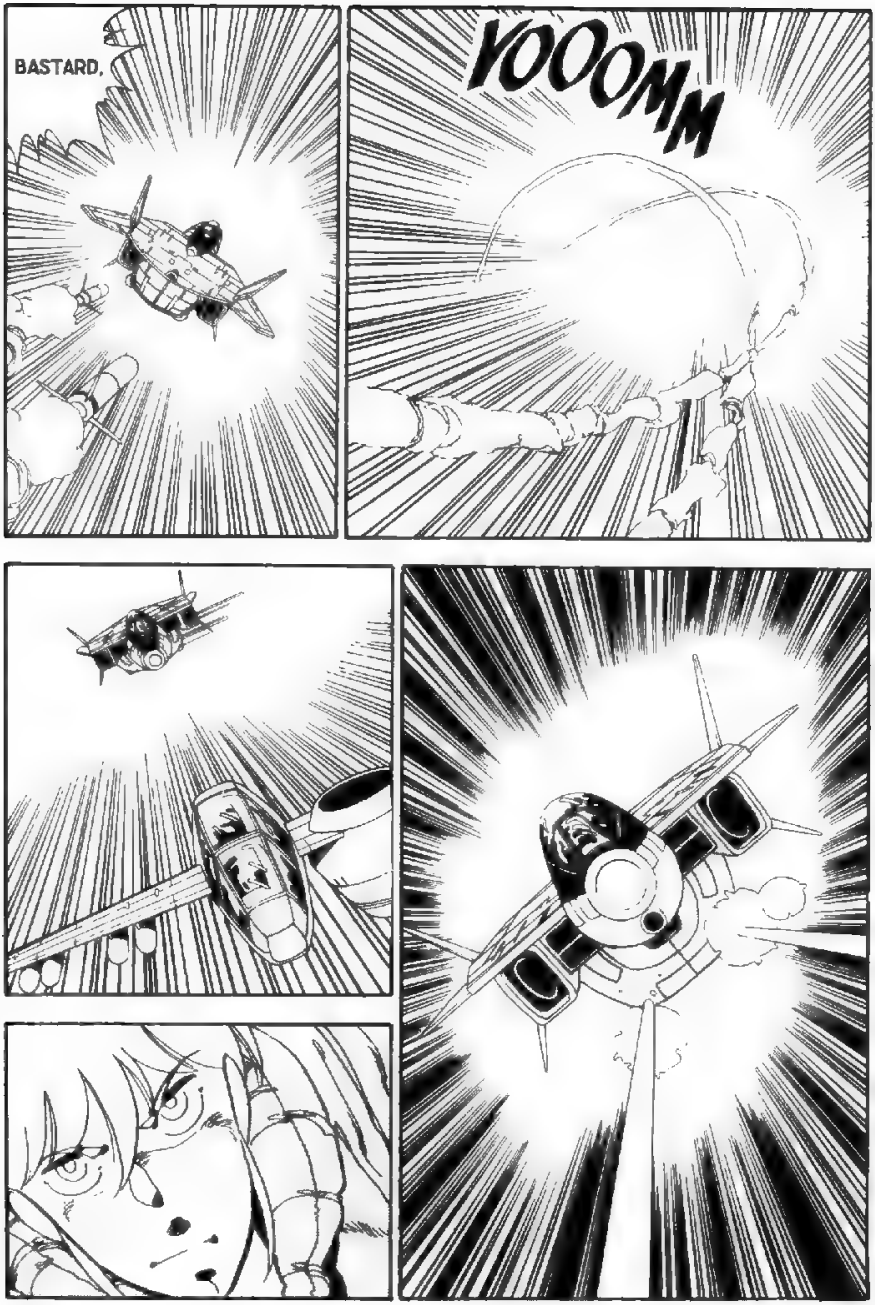
NOW!!

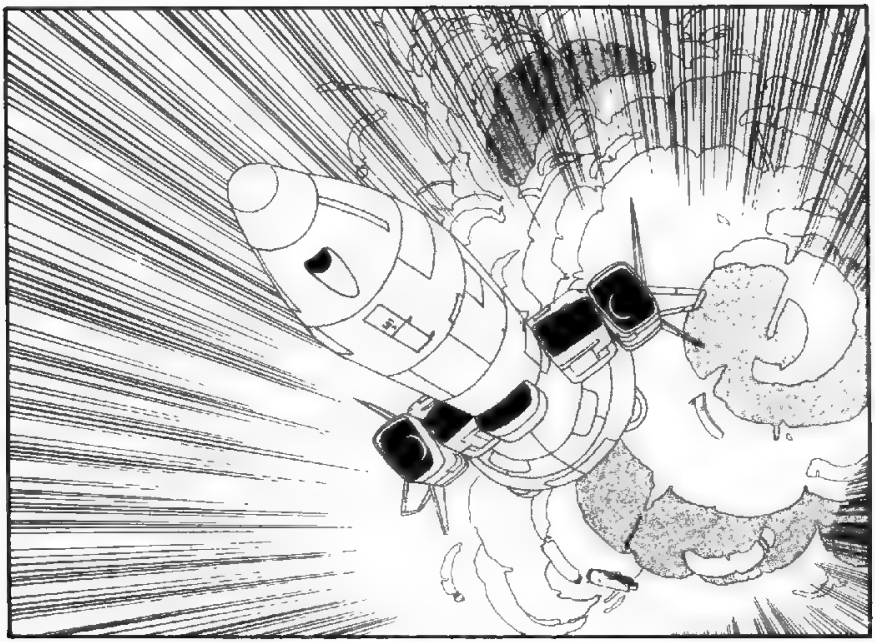

VOM

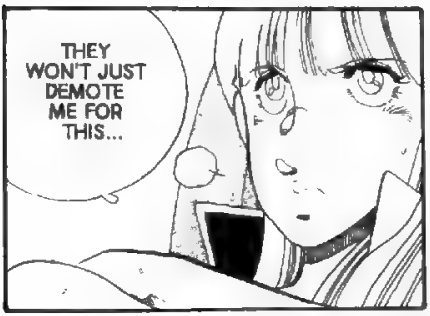
EEEEEEEEEE
SHOULD I TAKE OVER?
I HOPE SO...
THAT WAS HORRIBLE. HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO DIE?
YOU LOOK PRETTY LIVELY TO ME.
.....


SAVE THAT FOR LATER. THE *TOWN DEFENSE FORCE* WILL BE COMING...
THEY'RE ALREADY HERE.
WHAT'LL YOU DO, GREY?
IF YOU FIGHT *TDF*...
WHAT'LL I DO?
I DON'T HAVE ANY *FRIENDS* IN TDF.
PAM

SURPRISE, SURPRISE.
THIS BABY'S GOT BEAM-CANNONS.
WOULD TOWN JOY REALLY HAVE A WEAPON LIKE THIS?
LOOKS LIKE.
KA-BOOM
UH-OH.

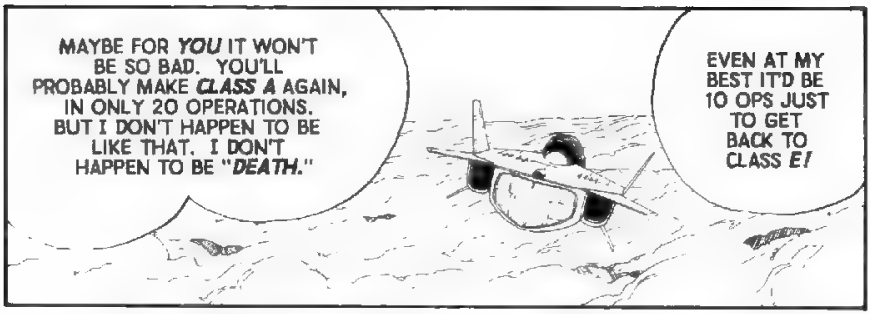

BASTARD,
VOOOMM

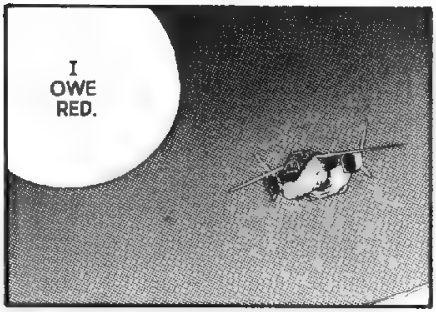


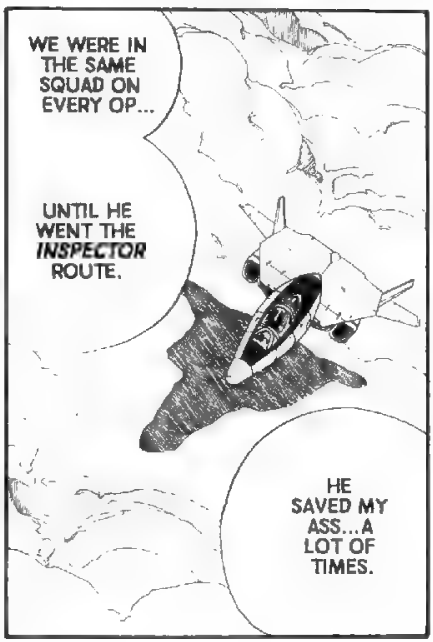

THEY WON'T JUST DEMOTE ME FOR THIS...

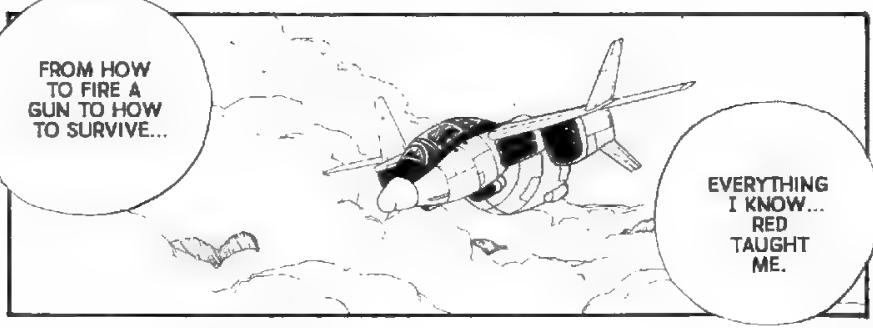
NO KIDDING.

WE COULD BE DISCHARGED... BECOME JUST *PEOPLE* AGAIN.
WON'T BE SO BAD.

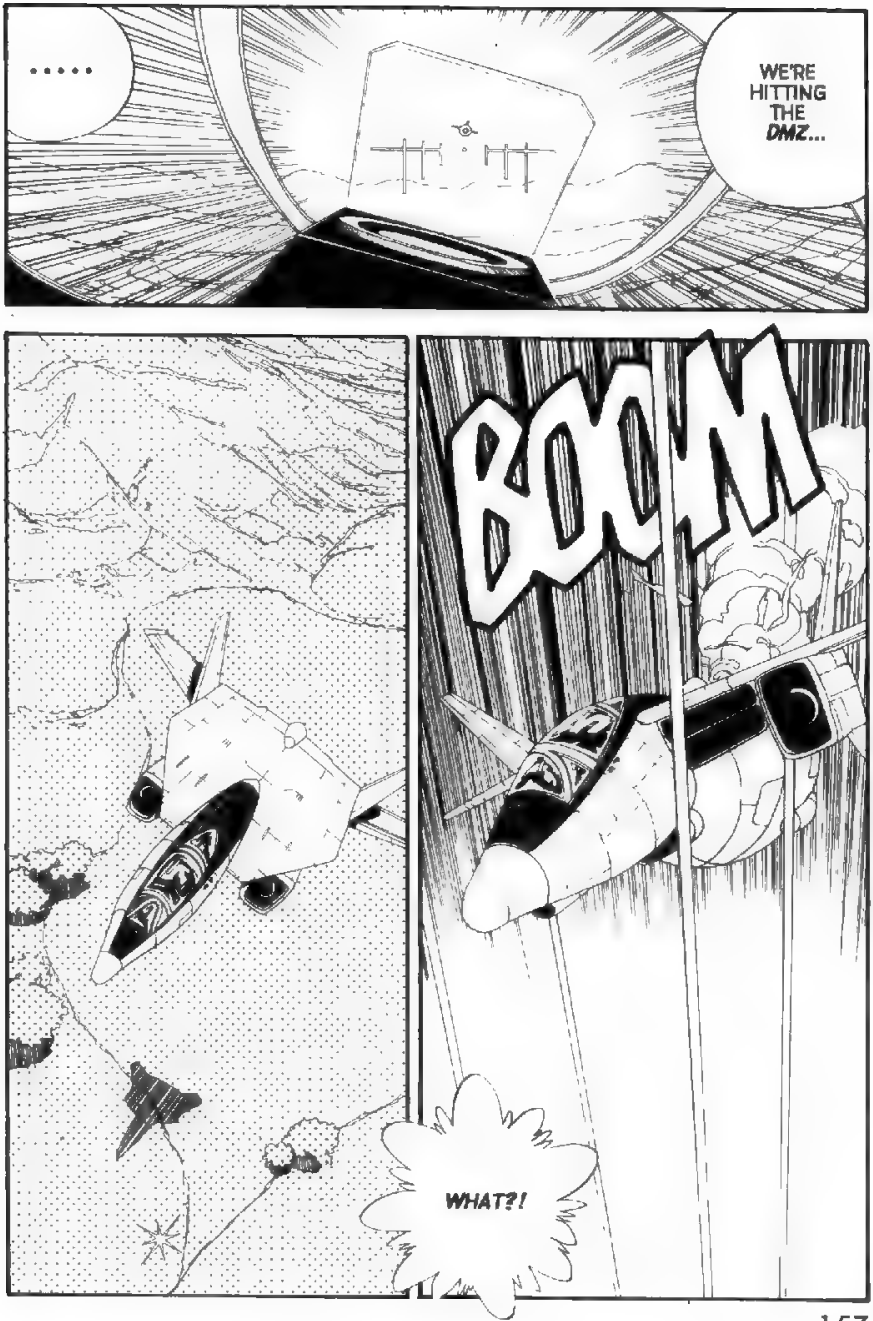

MAYBE FOR *YOU* IT WON'T BE SO BAD. YOU'LL PROBABLY MAKE *CLASS A* AGAIN, IN ONLY 20 OPERATIONS. BUT I DON'T HAPPEN TO BE LIKE THAT. I DON'T HAPPEN TO BE "*DEATH.*"
EVEN AT MY BEST IT'D BE 10 OPS JUST TO GET BACK TO CLASS *E!*


I OWE RED.


WE WERE IN THE SAME SQUAD ON EVERY OP...
UNTIL HE WENT THE *INSPECTOR* ROUTE.
HE SAVED MY ASS...A LOT OF TIMES.


FROM HOW TO FIRE A GUN TO HOW TO SURVIVE...
EVERYTHING I KNOW... RED TAUGHT ME.

HE SAID HE WANTED TO MAKE UP FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO PROTECT *LIPS.*
THEN LIPS WAS...
IN RED'S SQUADRON TOO.
FOR JUST ONE OPERATION...
ONE SHE NEVER CAME BACK FROM.


.....
WE'RE HITTING THE DMZ...
BOOM
WHAT?!

SURFACE MISSILES-- HITTING ALL THE WAY UP *HERE!?*
THEY'RE *QUICK-FIRERS,* GREY! AND THEY'RE GOING TO--
BA-BOOM
EEEEE!!

TRACE THEIR TRAJECTORY, NOVA!
I'M TRYING!
CAN'T YOU *STABILIZE* THIS BIRD?
COME ON. SPARE ME THE JOKES.
WHO COULD JOKE AT A--
I'VE *TRACED* IT!
SYNCH IT TO MY TERMINAL!

DOES THIS BIRD HAVE MISSILES OR SOMETHING?
B-SHOOO
RIGHT HERE... PROBABLY.
BINK
YOU WERE RIGHT!
SHOOOM

GET 'EM?
RIGHT ON TARGET!

I HATE TO RUIN THE MOOD, BABE...
BUT THIS BIRD IS GOING TO CRASH.
CRASH! CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING?!
WE'VE GOT AIR-BIKES IN THE BACK.
IF WE TAKE IT TO THE WIRE AND THEN JUMP...
...WE'LL SURVIVE SOMEHOW...
IT SOUNDS AWFULLY RISKY, GREY.

FEEL FREE TO GO DOWN WITH THE BIRD.
IT'S UP TO YOU.
OKAY, OKAY. I'LL DO IT.
LET'S GO!
I CAN'T TAKE THIS!
ZEEE!

Approach Three: The Demilitarized Zone, Part 2

WE GOTTA *RETRO-FIRE*-- FULL POWER-- AT MY SIGNAL.
YOU READY?
READY!? I DON'T KNOW HOW!
FLIP THE YELLOW SWITCH BY YOUR LEFT GRIP...
YOU'LL BE PULLING THE LEVER UNDER THE RIGHT HANDLE WHILE YOU STEP ON THAT PEDAL BY YOUR RIGHT ANKLE...

STEP ON IT...
...NOW!!
KROOM!

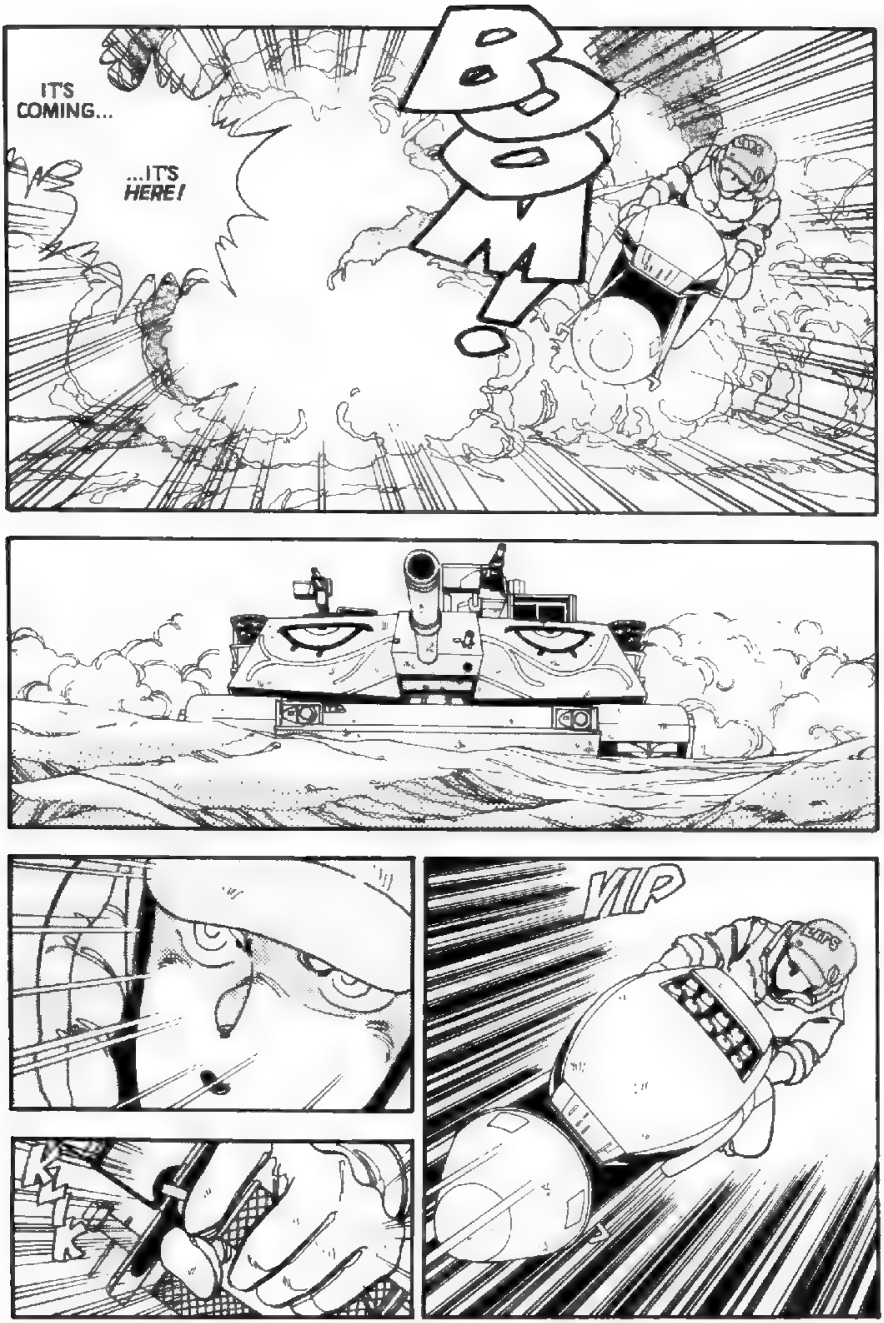
NOW EASE UP ON THE PEDAL... EASE UP...
PUSH THE LEVER BACK *SLOW.*
REV YOUR MAIN ENGINE.
NOW *SHIFT*... SECOND GEAR.
grrnk

BRAKE...
HYUNNNN
...AND SHIFT DOWN.
OKAY.
PHEW
I THOUGHT I'D DIE.
GREY... WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BIRD?
DUNNO. MUST'VE CRASHED OVER THERE SOMEWHERE.
WELL, GREY, I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU...
WE'RE GOING TO RESCUE RED, RIGHT?

AND AFTER THAT...HOW DO WE GET HOME?
I DON'T KNOW.
YOU HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT, HAVE YOU?
THE BIRD CRASHING WASN'T PART OF MY PLAN.
DO YOU KNOW HOW FAR IT IS FROM HERE TO TOWN 303?
OVER 10,000 KILOMETERS. IN A STRAIGHT LINE.
PJIK
ENTER
ARE YOU PLANNING TO WALK HOME?

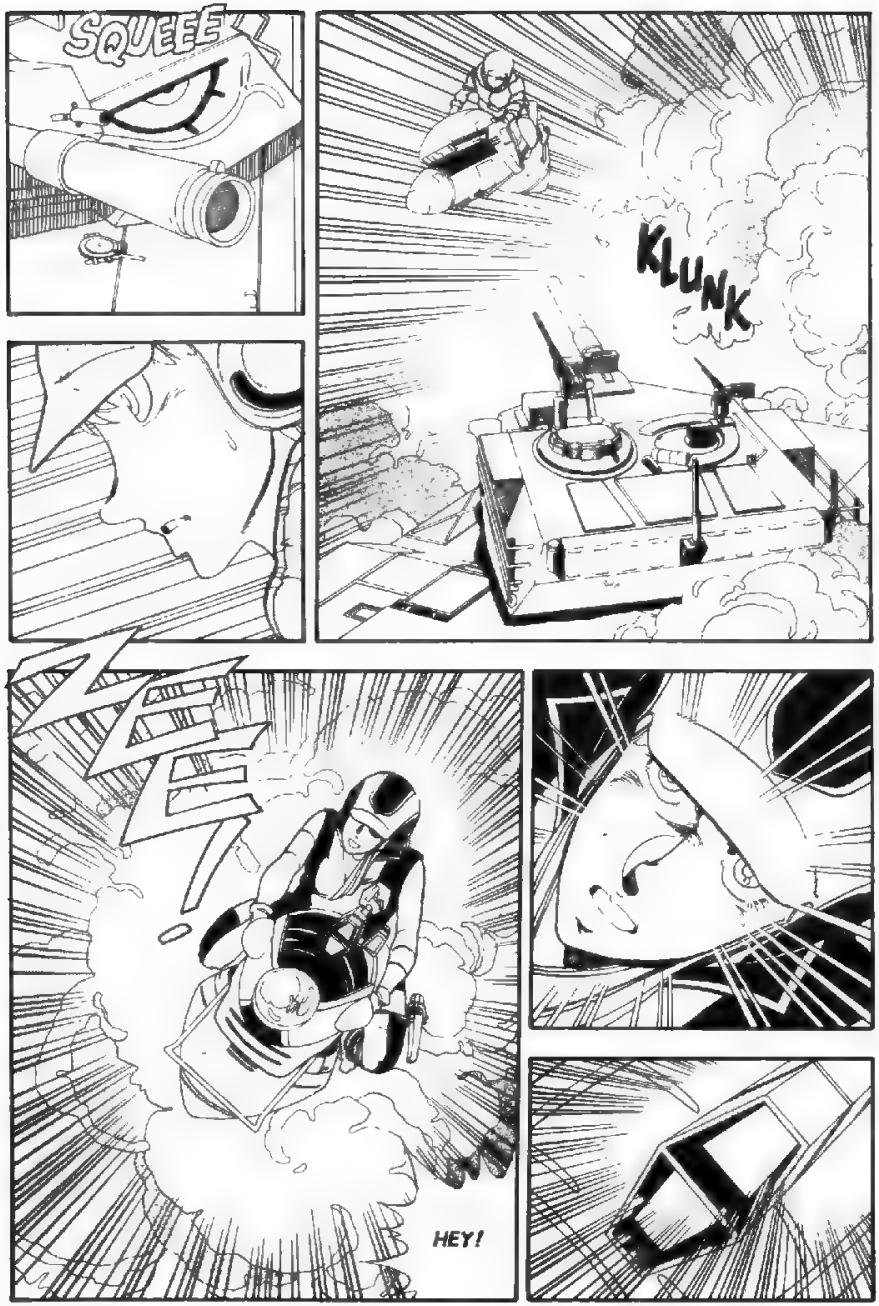
BEFORE YOU THINK ABOUT GETTING HOME...
...HOW ABOUT THINKING ABOUT SURVIVING THIS BATTLE?
.....
IT'S COMING... STRAIGHT AHEAD.
WHAT?
I'LL TAKE THE LEFT!
ZEEE
YOU TAKE THE RIGHT!
THE RIGHT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT? GREY, WAIT! IS THIS BIKE ARMED?

IT'S A COMBAT BIKE. THE RED SWITCH ON THE RIGHT RUNS THE GUNS. PROBABLY.
IS THIS IT?
K-IK
"PROBABLY," HE SAYS.... GREAT.
HUH?
CHUNK
I DID IT!
STOP PLAYING, IDIOT!
LIPS


IT'S COMING...
...IT'S HERE!
BOOM!
VIP

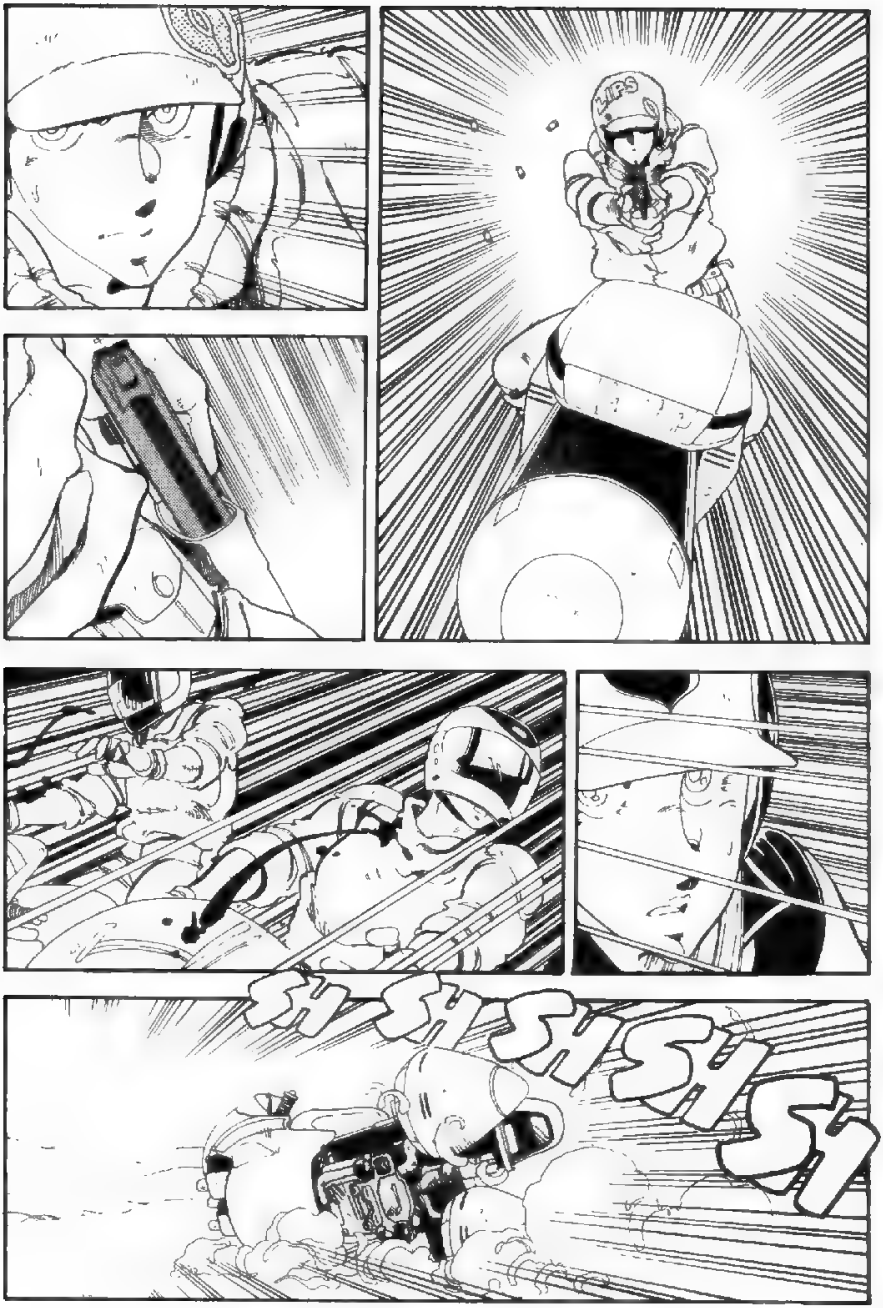
VOOSH!!
BUH-WHOOM!!

BASTARD!
WHOMP


SQUEEE
KLUNK
HEY!

ZUA
VOW!
SHFSHFSHF

WHOOSH
EYES FRONT!
beeee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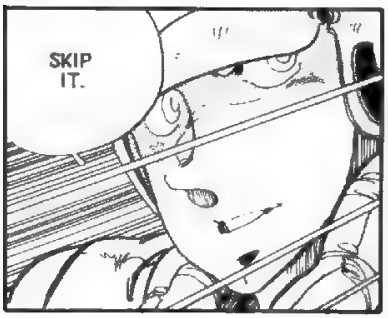
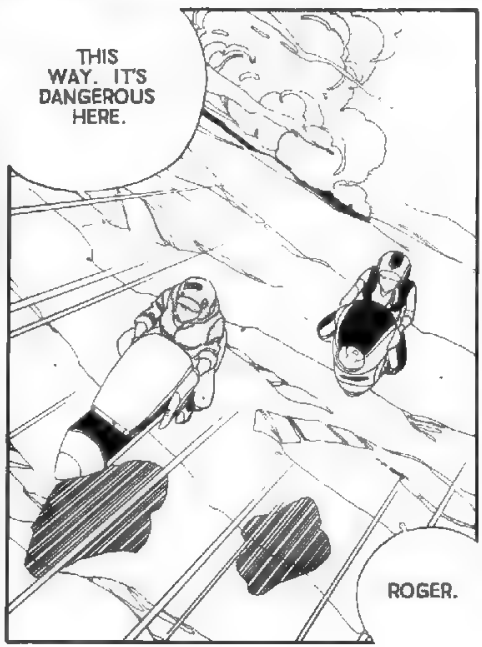
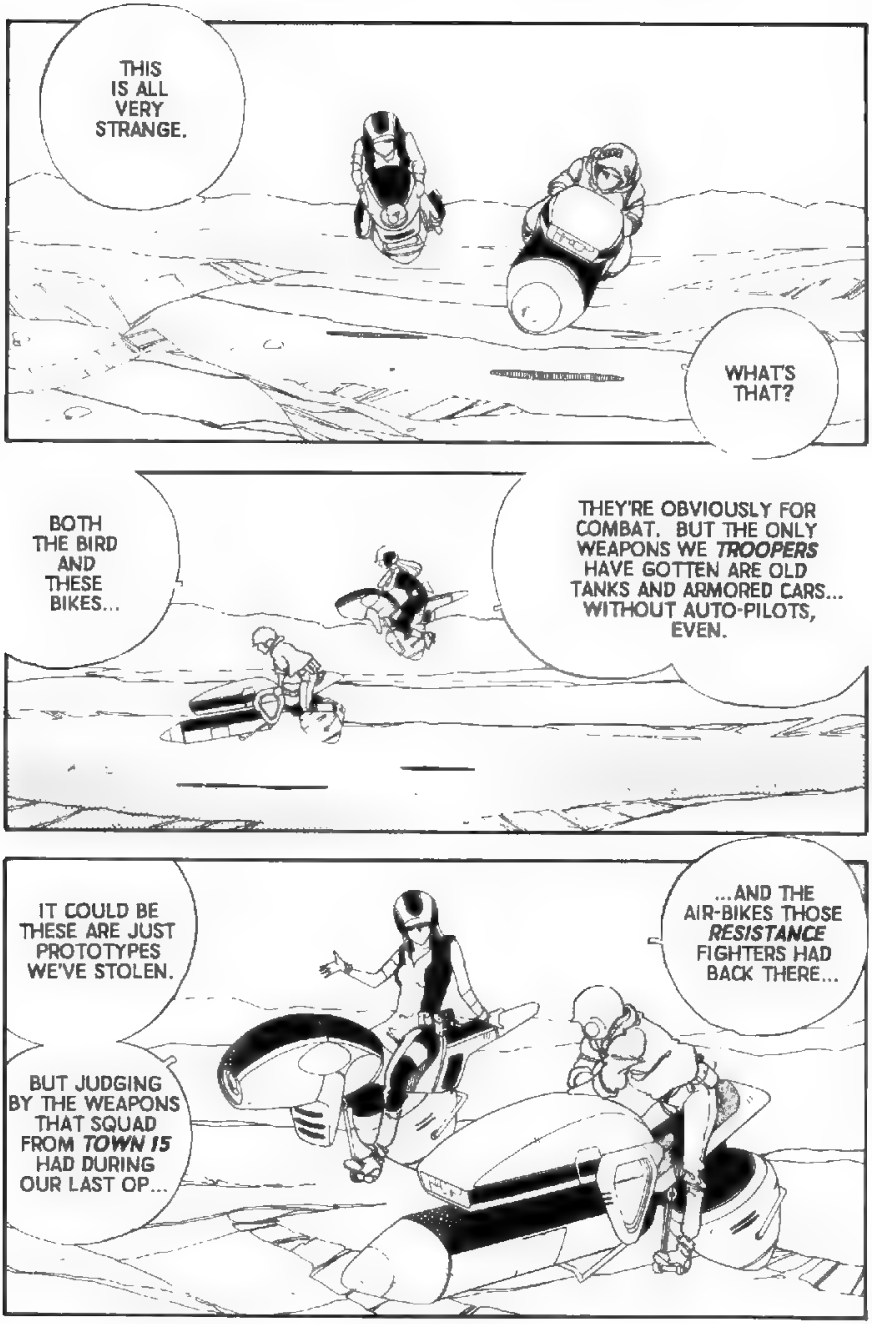
ガチャ

THANKS.


SKIP IT.


THIS WAY. IT'S DANGEROUS HERE.
ROGER.


THIS IS ALL VERY STRANGE.
WHAT'S THAT?
BOTH THE BIRD AND THESE BIKES...
THEY'RE OBVIOUSLY FOR COMBAT. BUT THE ONLY WEAPONS WE *TROOPERS* HAVE GOTTEN ARE OLD TANKS AND ARMORED CARS... WITHOUT AUTO-PILOTS, EVEN.
IT COULD BE THESE ARE JUST PROTOTYPES WE'VE STOLEN.
BUT JUDGING BY THE WEAPONS THAT SQUAD FROM *TOWN 15* HAD DURING OUR LAST OP...
...AND THE AIR-BIKES THOSE *RESISTANCE* FIGHTERS HAD BACK THERE...

I MEAN, THE RESISTANCE MUST HAVE STOLEN THE BIKES FROM SOME *TOWN*, RIGHT?
MOST LIKELY.
WHY?
WHY IS THERE SO MUCH DIVERGENCE IN WEAPONRY? IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
WHY DON'T YOU ASK MAMA?
AS IF SHE'D ANSWER ME.
GOT IT...RED'S LAND-CARRIER!

LOOKS LIKE SHIT.
EVERY SINGLE USABLE PART HAS BEEN STRIPPED.
THEY'RE LIKE HYENAS...

WHAT'S A "HYENA"?
HEARD ABOUT IT FROM MY GRANDDAD WHEN I WAS A KID.
SOME ANIMAL THAT LIVED BACK WHEN THE OCEAN WAS STILL BLUE, AND A HUNDRED TIMES BIGGER THAN IT IS NOW.
AFTER THESE HYENAS ATE AN ANIMAL, THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT BUT BONES.
HUH...
WHEN THE OCEAN WAS BLUE...
WHAT IS IT?
WOULDN'T THAT BE WEIRD, GREY? A *BLUE* OCEAN?

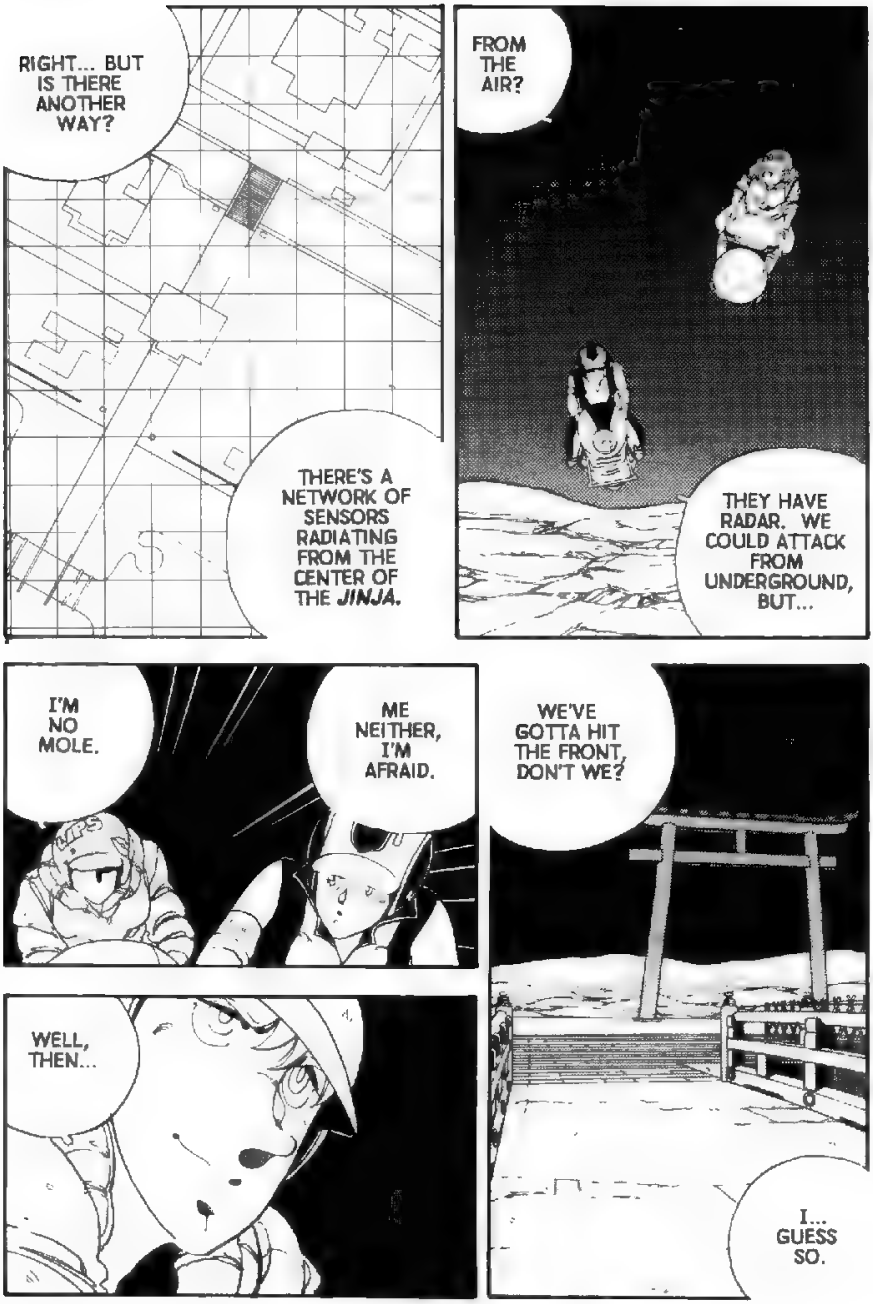
!!
CRICKET.
SHIK
DESERVES TO BE CALLED "DEATH."
...OF A BITCH.
IS HE GOING TO BE AN INSPECTOR? I ADVISED HIM TO APPLY, BUT...

DEATH'S JOB IS TO KILL PEOPLE, RIGHT?
RED.
IS IT BOSCH?
NO, IT'S NOT HIM.
THEY'RE...
...SURVIVORS OF ANOTHER SQUAD?
THEY'RE RESISTANCE, RED. THEY HAVE A TANK. WOULD THEY ATTACK? IMPOSSIBLE.
THEY DON'T HAVE THE BALLS!
ROCKET INCOMING!
DAMN! OPEN THE HANGAR, CRICKET! I'LL USE THE TANK!
TOO LATE!
IT'S A DIRECT--

.....
.....
!!
C-CRICKET...
...WH-WHO ARE YOU...
...LET ME... GO...
NOVA! LET'S GO!
ROGER.
VOOT!
.....

TRACE RED'S *I.D.* SIGNAL!
WILL DO!
GOT IT! NORTH-NORTHWEST... 3500...
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!
THERE ARE BUILDINGS!
IS IT...A CHURCH?
NO... IT ISN'T.
WHAT IS THAT? I'VE NEVER...
A *TORII*, THE GATE TO A *JINJA*.

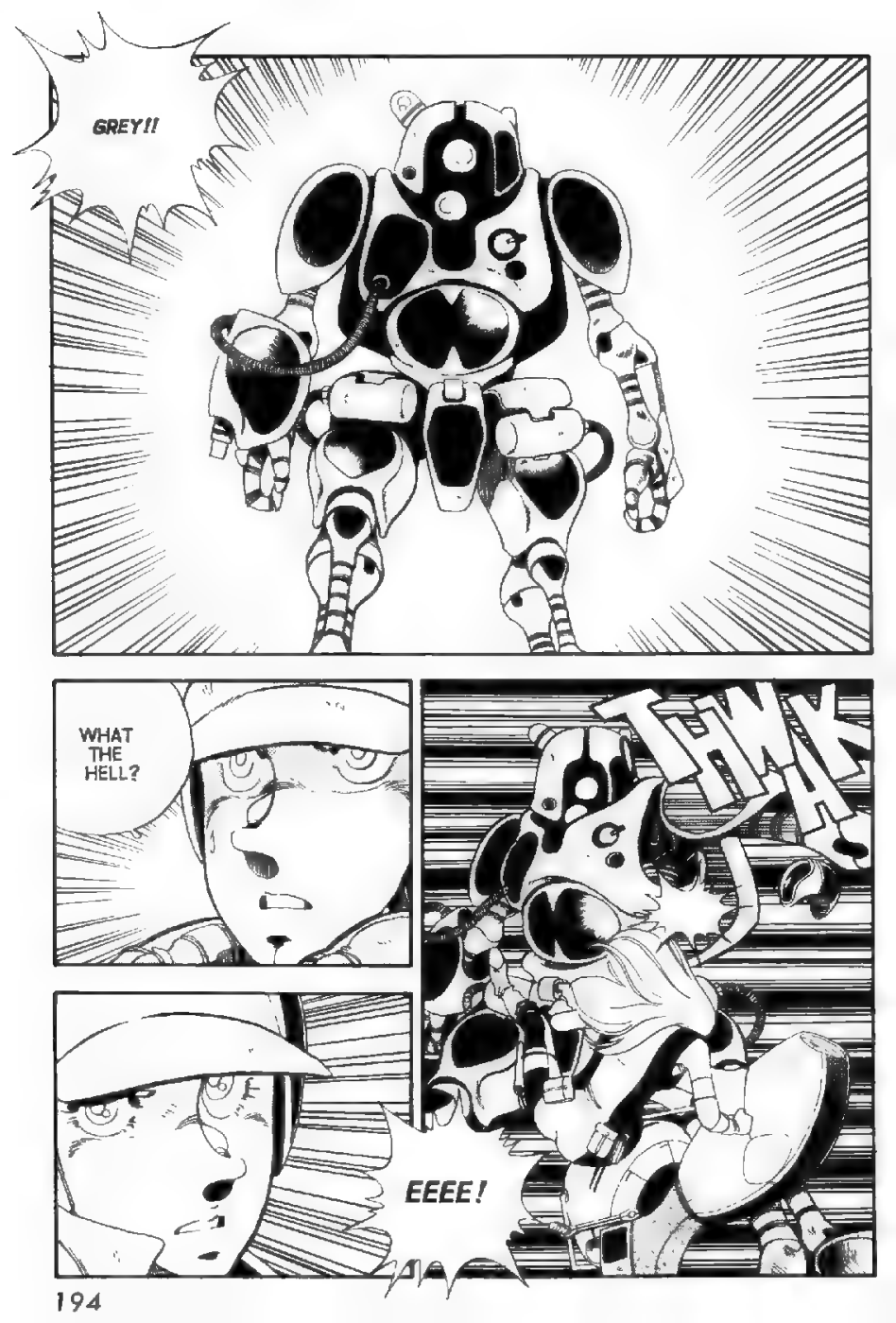
A JINJA?
I THINK IT WAS SOME RELIGION IN ASIA, SOMEWHERE.
SOME KIND OF RELIGIOUS BUILDING.
IT'S HUGE.
WE CAN'T RUSH IT FROM THE FRONT.
WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT OR HOW MANY ARE INSIDE.
RIGHT.

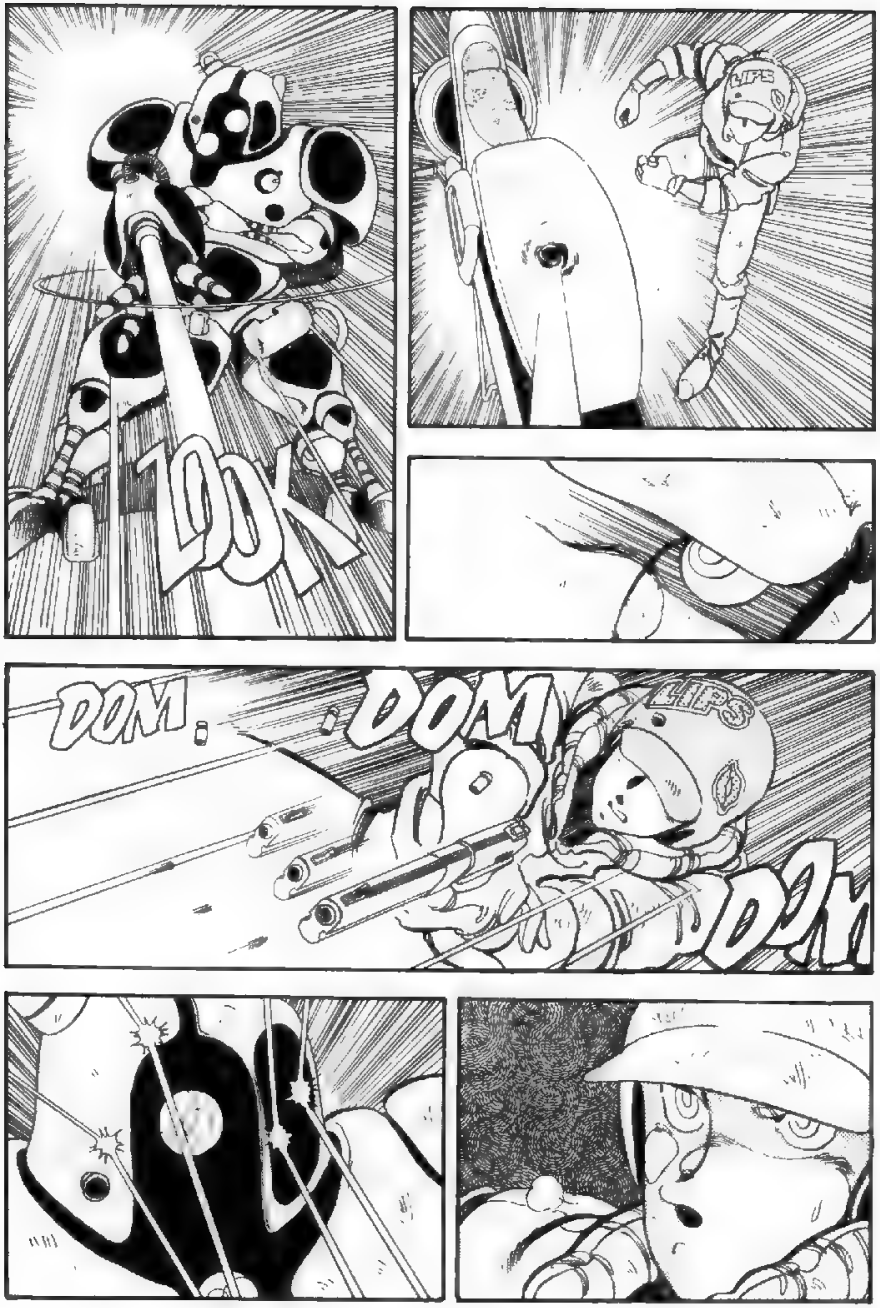

RIGHT... BUT IS THERE ANOTHER WAY?
THERE'S A NETWORK OF SENSORS RADIATING FROM THE CENTER OF THE *JINJA*.
FROM THE AIR?
THEY HAVE RADAR. WE COULD ATTACK FROM UNDERGROUND, BUT...
I'M NO MOLE.
ME NEITHER, I'M AFRAID.
WE'VE GOTTA HIT THE FRONT, DON'T WE?
WELL, THEN...
I... GUESS SO.

DO WE HAVE A CHANCE?
BUT YOU'LL DO IT ANYWAY.
NO WAY.
I WILL.
IS RED STILL ALIVE?
DON'T KNOW.
I'LL TAKE THE LEFT.
.....
OKAY.

LET'S DO IT.
RRMRRMRRMRRM
?
WHAT'S THAT NOISE?
BEATS ME.
BEATS ME, BUT...
...IT'S A BIG CORPS, ALL RIGHT.
RRMRRMRRMRRMRRM
ON OUR SIDE?

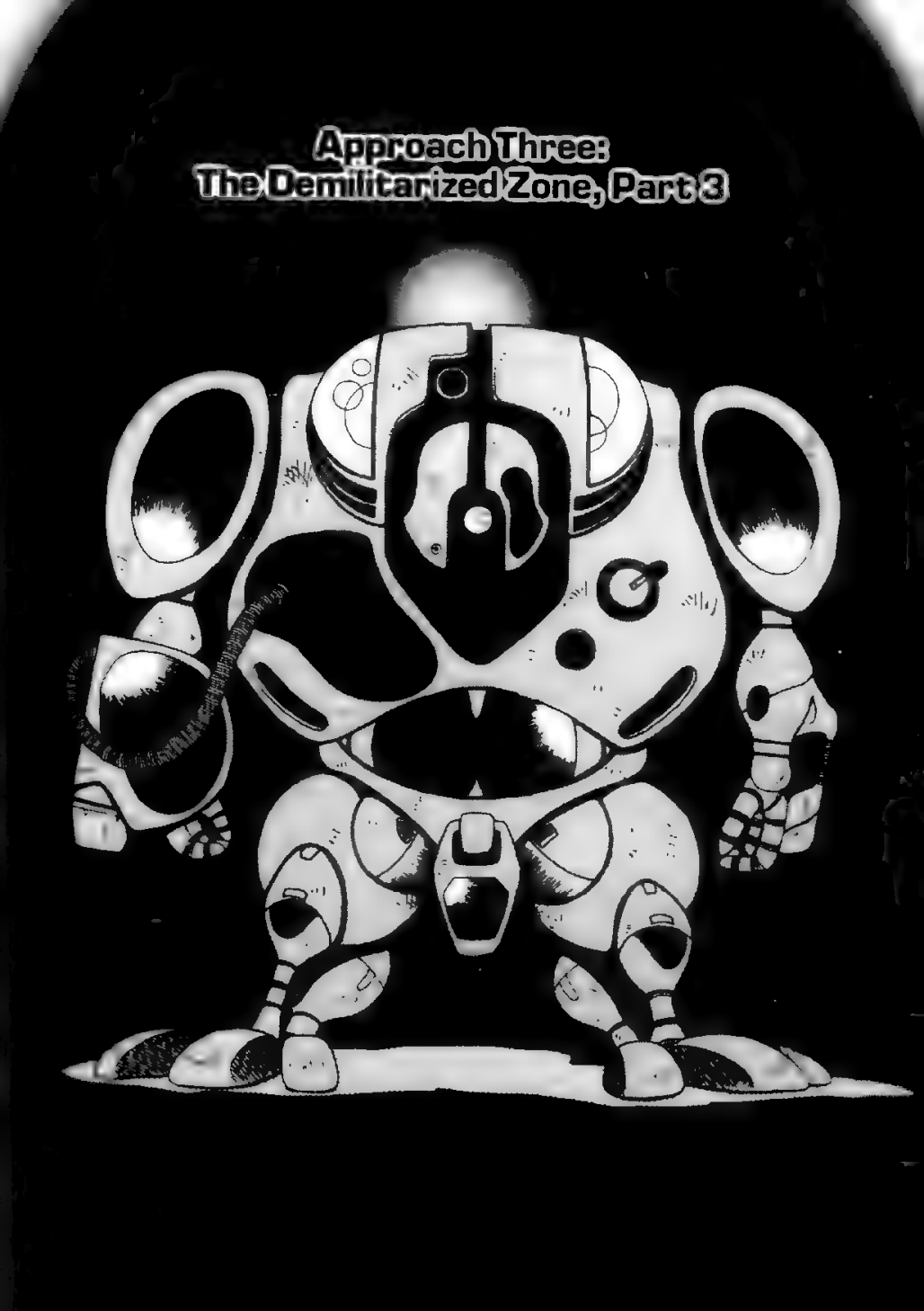
303 NEVER HAD A FORCE LIKE THAT.
HOW ABOUT OTHER TOWNS?
DON'T KNOW. THEY DON'T SEEM LIKE RESISTANCE, ANYWAY.
WHAT DO WE DO, GREY?
RRMRRMRRMRRM
WE RETREAT...
THEN WE WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

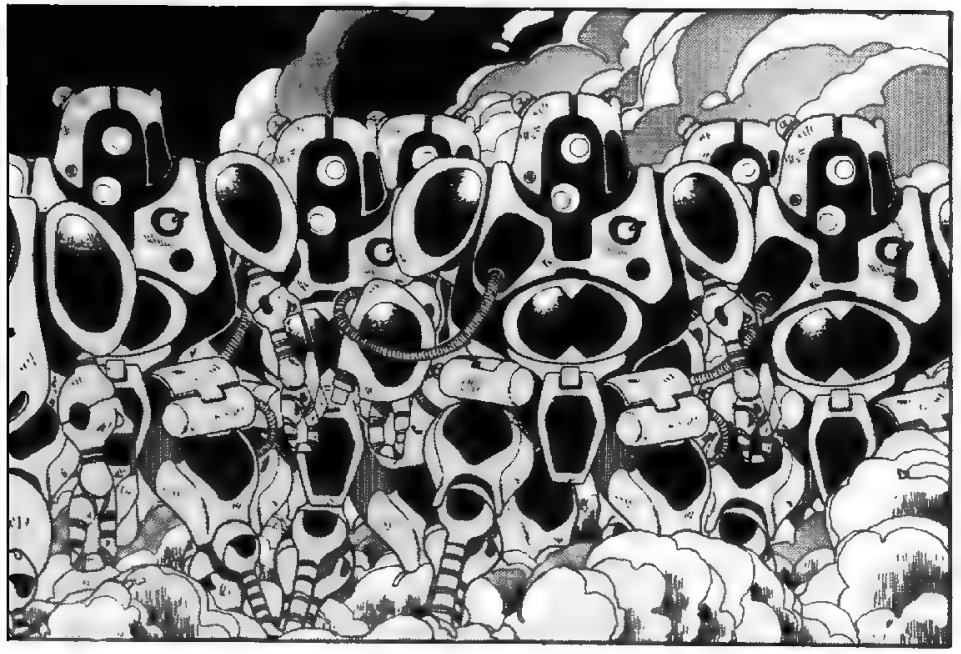

GREY!!
WHAT THE HELL?
THWAK!
EEEE!

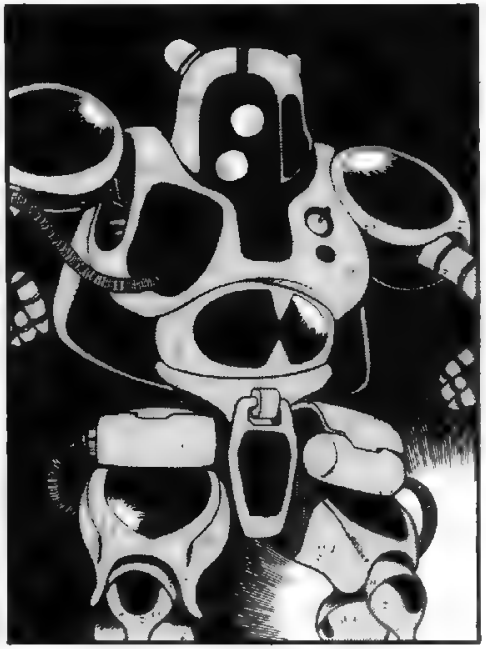

LOK
LIPS
DOM. DOM
DOM
LIPS

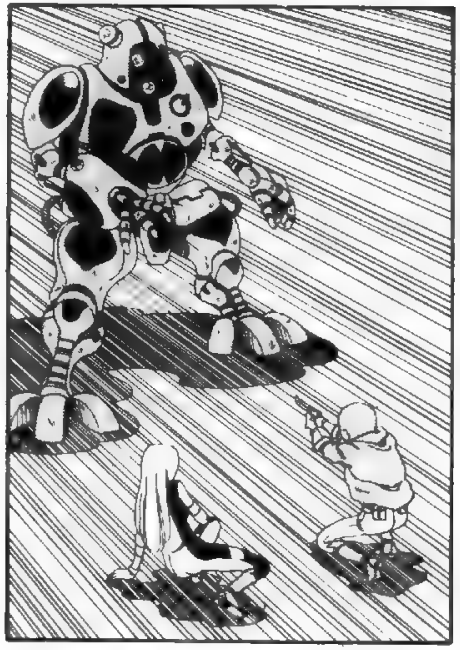
...GREY!
!!

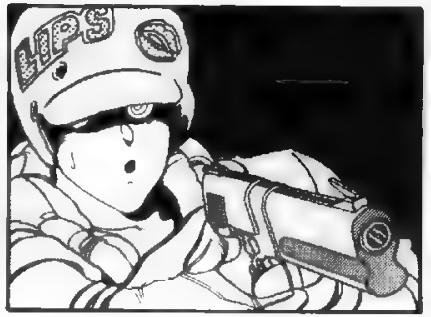
Approach Three:
The Demilitarized Zone, Part 3

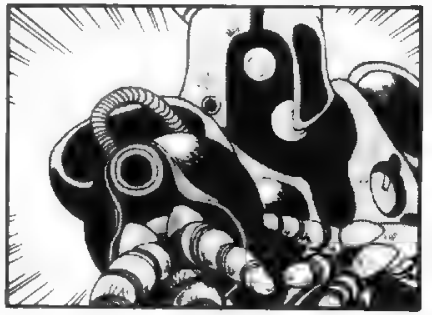


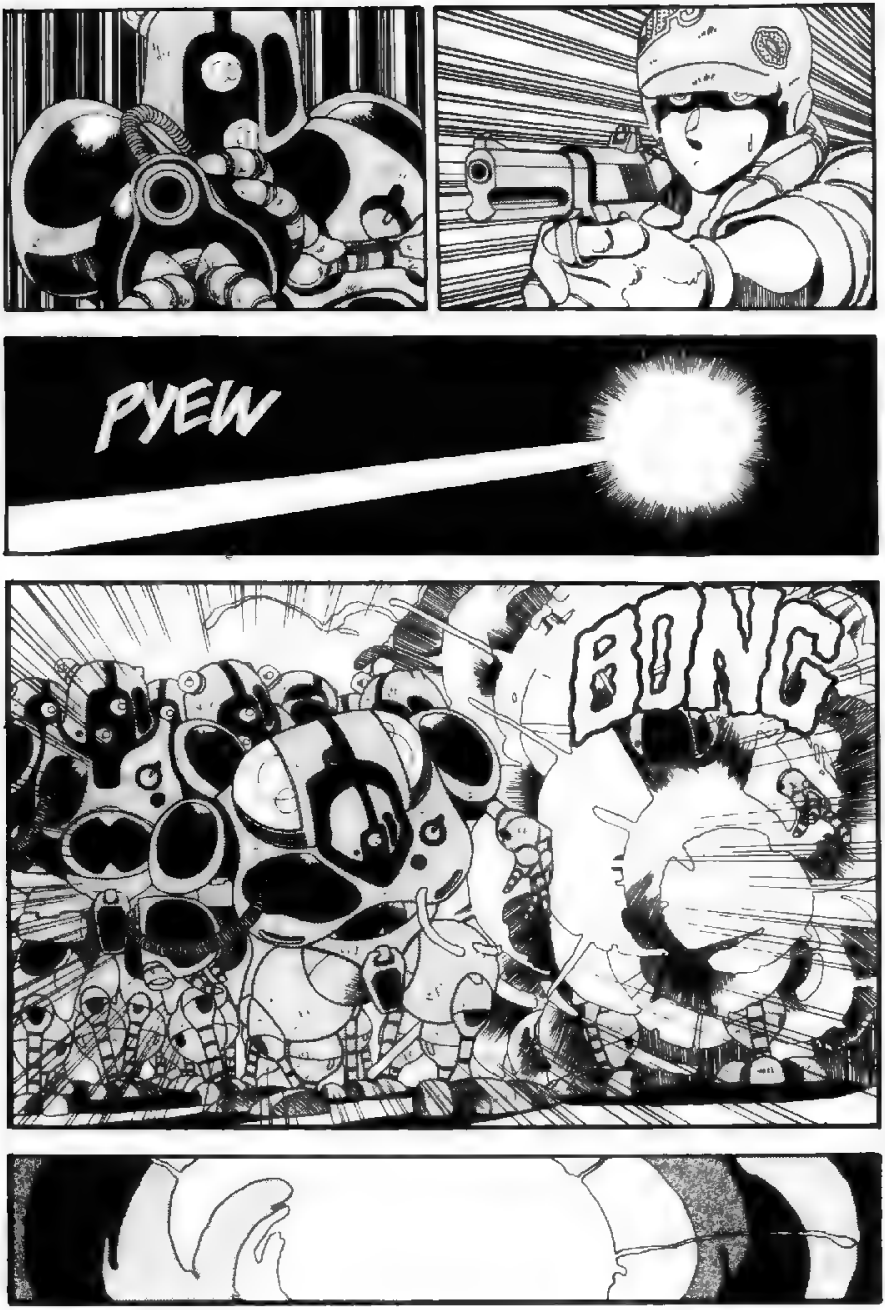


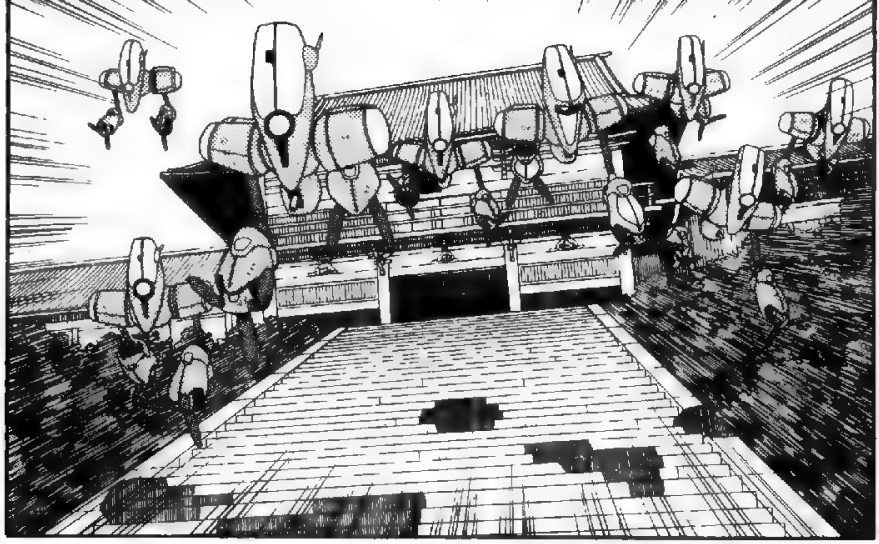


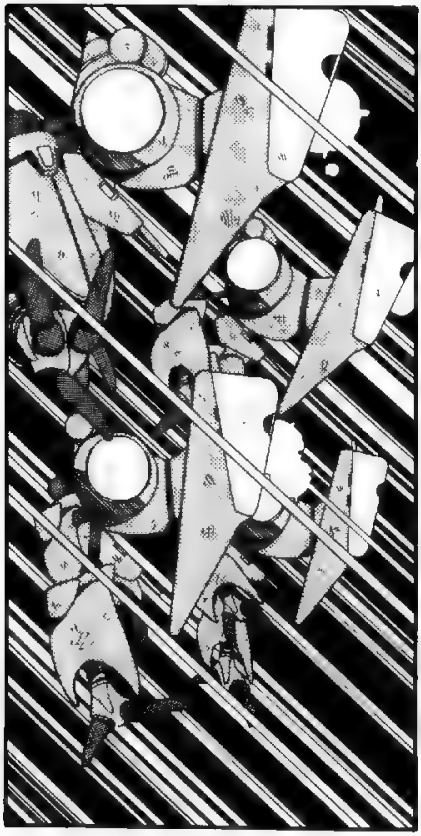


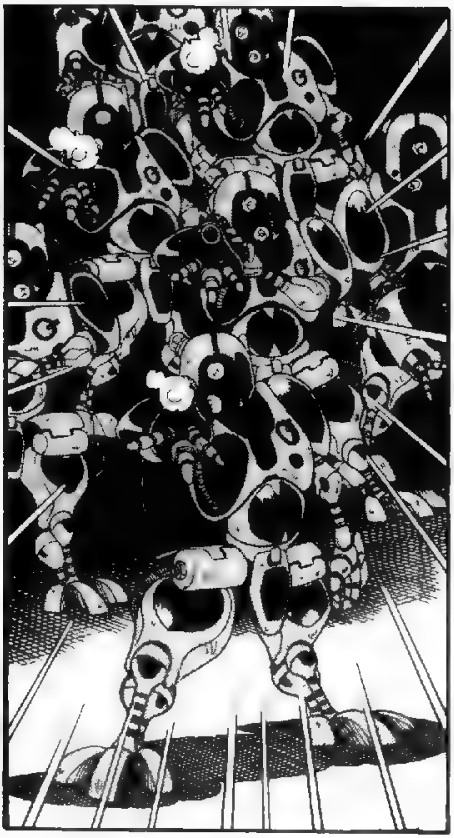

HPS




PYEW
BONG







POW
BOM
SHOO!
GA BOOM
KLAK

BOOM
EEE!!
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?!
BEATS ME.
ANYWAY, I DON'T THINK IT'S ANYTHING TO DO WITH US.
BOOM
HOW *COULD* IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH US?!

WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE DOLLS?
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THEM! HOW COULD THEY POSSIBLY BE THAT BIG?
WHO'RE YA ASKING? I DIDN'T MAKE 'EM.
I KNOW YOU DIDN'T!
HEH, HEH. GOOD FOR YOU.
HEY, WHERE ARE WE GOING?
WE CAN'T TRACE RED'S I.D. SIGNAL FROM THIS COURTYARD.
SWIP
I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT. WHY WOULD THE RESISTANCE BRING RED HERE?
PROBABLY TO GET INFORMATION...
...MAYBE ABOUT THOSE GIANT DOLLS...
RED WOULDN'T BE ANY USE FOR THAT.

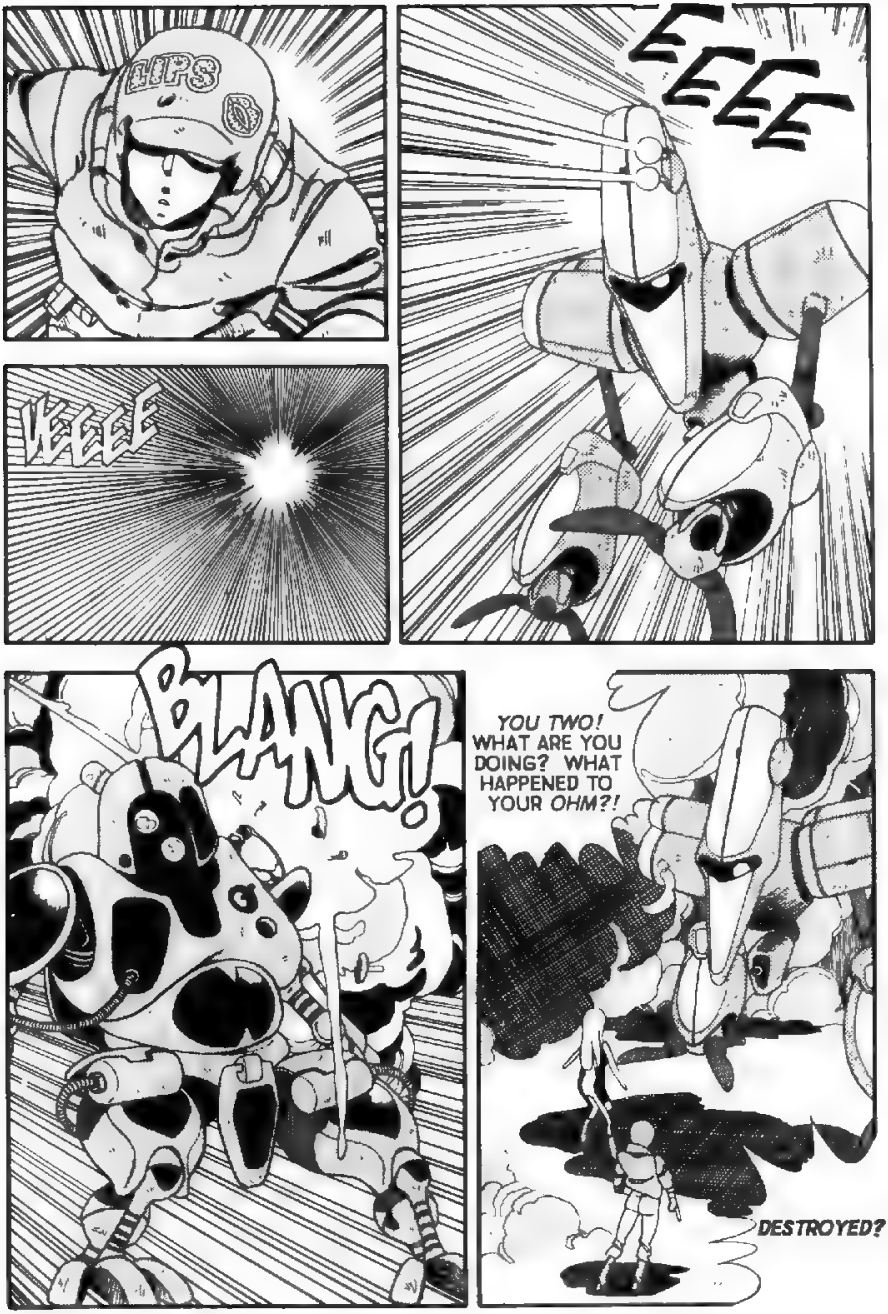
TRUE...
...SINCE *TOWN 303* DOESN'T HAVE SUPER-WEAPONS LIKE THAT...
...RED COULDN'T TELL THEM A THING.
OR...DO YOU MEAN HE WAS KILLED?
RED'S AN INSPECTOR...
VUUUU
THE RESISTANCE DOESN'T HAVE *LITTLE MAMA* OR THE *FACTORY*...SO WHAT THEY NEED MOST IS A MECHANIC, RIGHT?
SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HOW THINGS WORK!
MAKES SENSE.
BUT WHERE WOULD THEIR HANGAR BE?
LET'S FIND OUT. I'LL ASK 'EM.
BAM

WEEEE
NICE JOB.
BAM
ZIPS
YOU CAN PLUG INTO THE GUARD-MECH'S MEMORY WITH YOUR CARD-CASE, RIGHT?
DAMN, I'M SMART.
I GUESS SO...
BAM
13

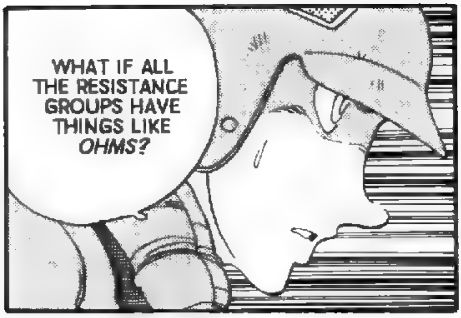
QUICK! I WANT TO BAIL RED BEFORE THEY FINISH OFF THE BIG DOLLS.
SO WHY DON'T YOU DO IT YOURSELF, GREY?
YEEEE
I'VE GOT ANOTHER JOB TO DO.
BA-LAMM
LOVE TO. BUT...
DO YOU WANNA MAKE A TRADE?
FORGET IT. I'VE GOT AN APTITUDE FOR ELECTRONICS.

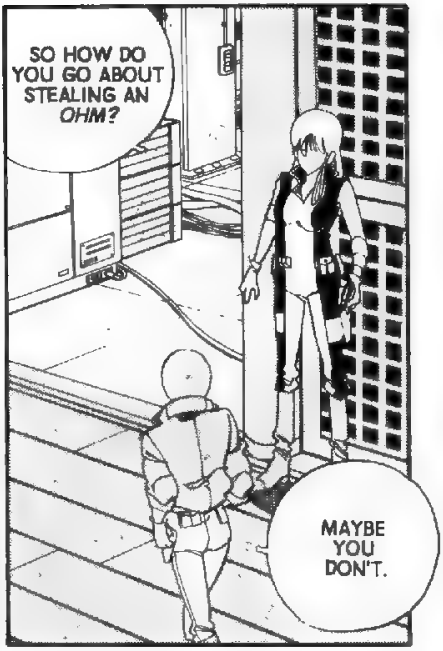
BOOM
YOU DONE YET?!
WAIT! JUST A SECOND...
SHAKE IT!
BAM
BAM
KLOMP
KLOMP
SPING
SPING

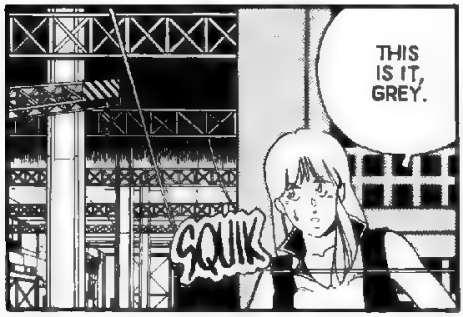
GOT IT, GREY!
BAM
THAT WOULDA BEEN SWELL... FIVE SECONDS EARLIER.
PYOW
DOESN'T THIS THING HAVE A WEAK POINT ANYWHERE?!
BWOW!
IT'S AN UGLY MOTHER...
I WOULDN'T LIKE IT EVEN IF IT WERE GORGEOUS!

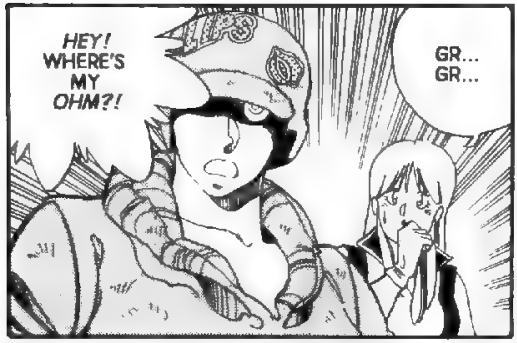

EEEE
BLANG!
YOU TWO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR OHM?!
DESTROYED?

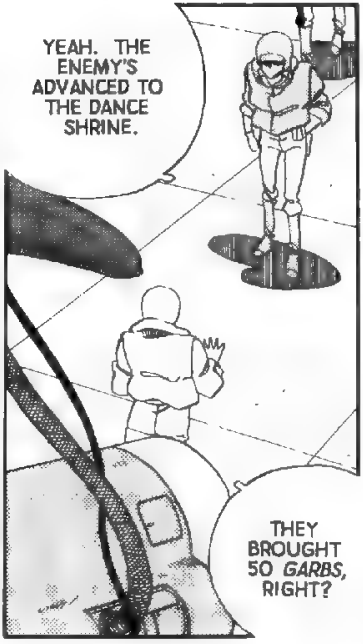
THERE SHOULD BE A FEW *OHMS* LEFT IN THE TREASURY.
THE ENEMY'S REACHED THE DANCE SHRINE.
VUUU
YOU TWO, GUARD THE CORRIDOR.
UH... *Y-YES* SIR!
HMM...
TOOK A FEW YEARS OFF MY LIFE.
SWISH
BUT GREY, I THOUGHT YOU WERE ***IMMORTAL.***
WHERE'S THIS DAMNED ***TREASURY,*** NOVA?
THAT'S THE HANGAR. TURN LEFT.
WHAT'D HE CALL THAT THING? *OHM?*
IT ACED THAT BIG DOLL WITH ***ONE SHOT!***

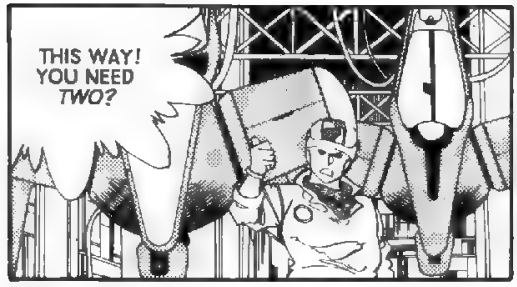

WHAT IF ALL THE RESISTANCE GROUPS HAVE THINGS LIKE *OHMS?*


SO HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT STEALING AN *OHM?*
MAYBE YOU DON'T.

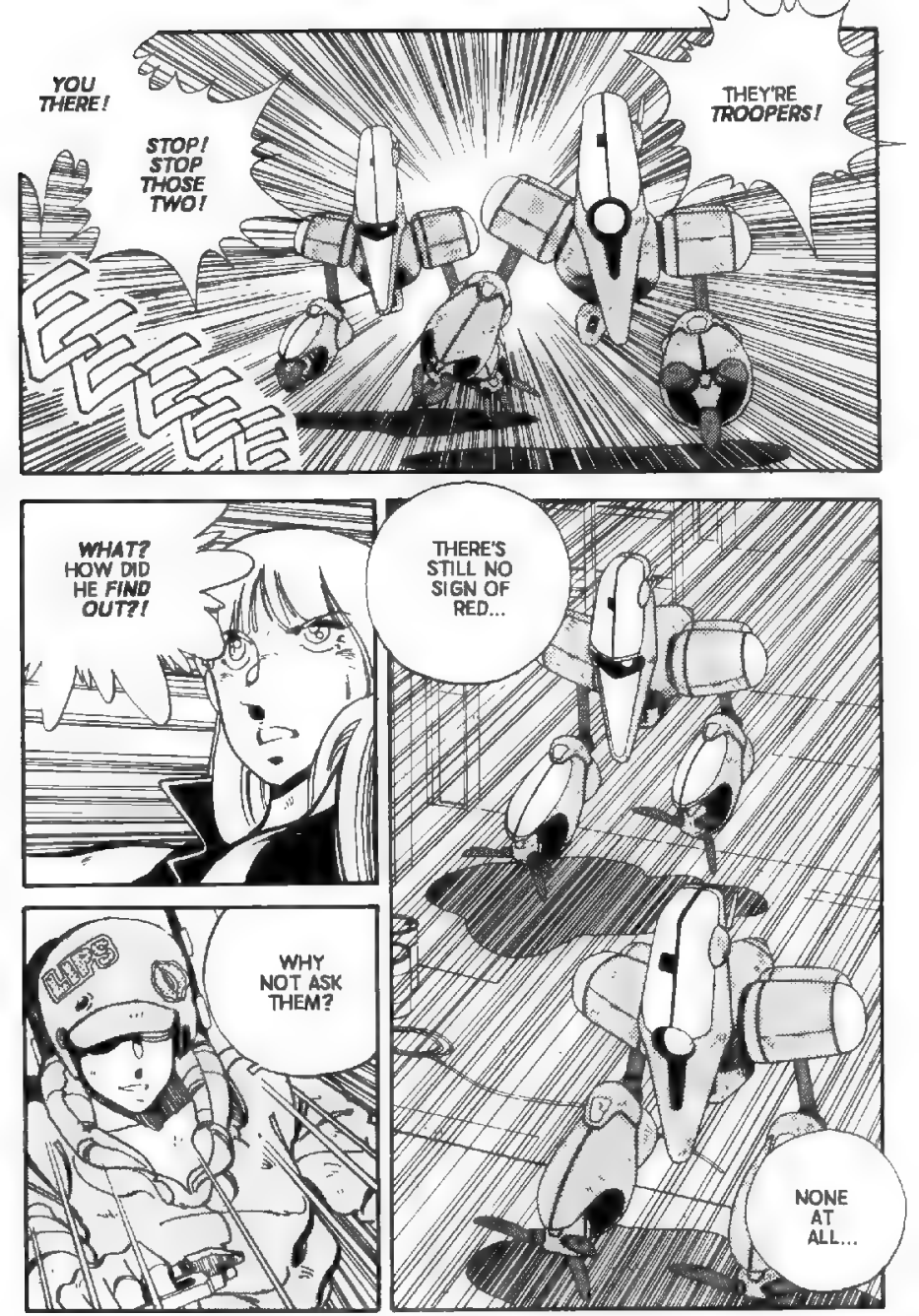

THIS IS IT, GREY.
SQUIK


HEY! WHERE'S MY *OHM?!*
GR... GR...

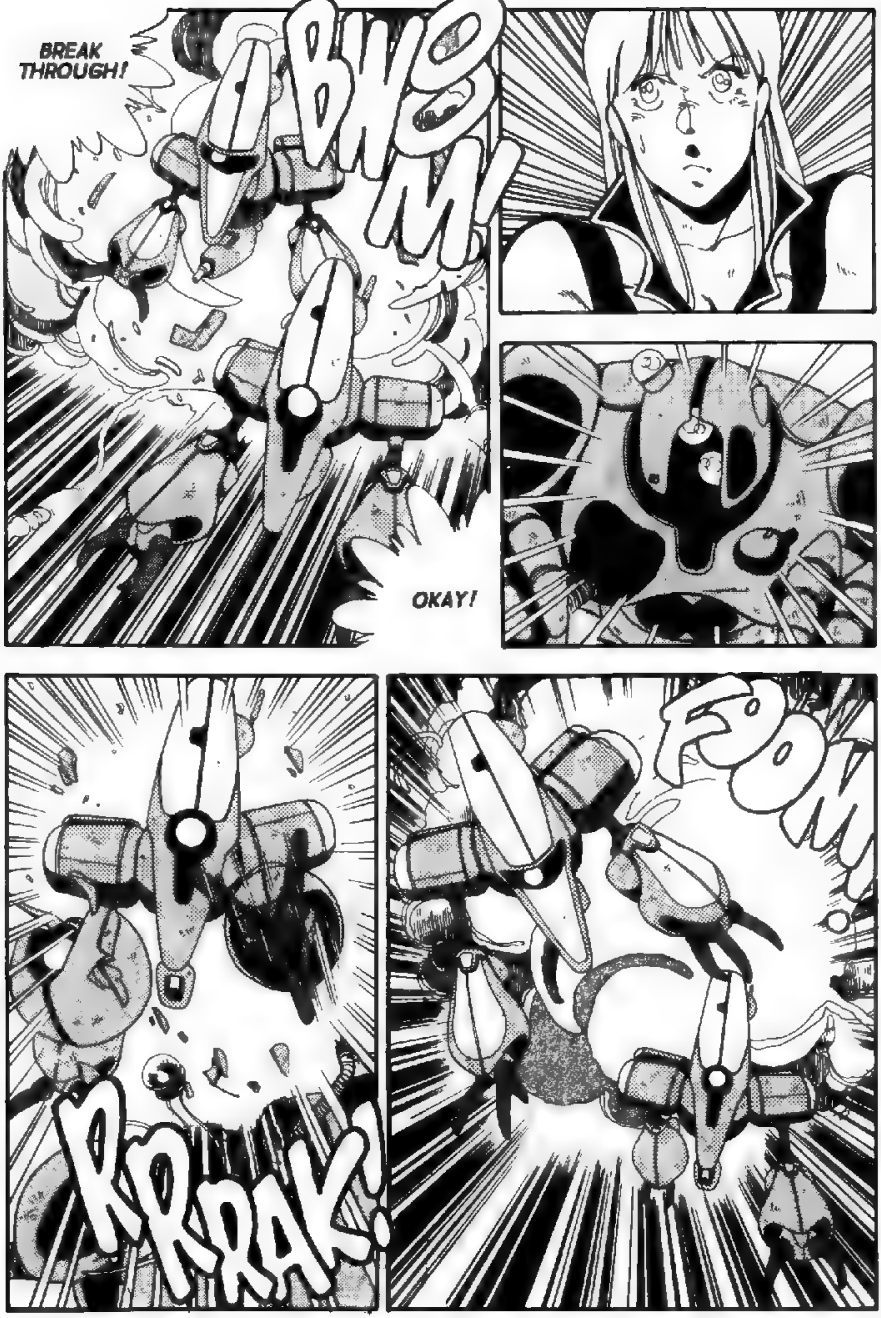

YEAH. THE ENEMY'S ADVANCED TO THE DANCE SHRINE.
THEY BROUGHT SO *GARBS*, RIGHT?


THIS WAY! YOU NEED *TWO?*

UH... YEAH.
OKAY, LET'S ROLL!
I'M READY, GREY!
DON'T BREAK 'EM THIS TIME, OKAY?
...GREY?
NOVA!!
VROOM!


YOU THERE!
STOP! STOP THOSE TWO!
THEY'RE TROOPERS!
WHAT? HOW DID HE FIND OUT?!
THERE'S STILL NO SIGN OF RED...
WHY NOT ASK THEM?
NONE AT ALL...

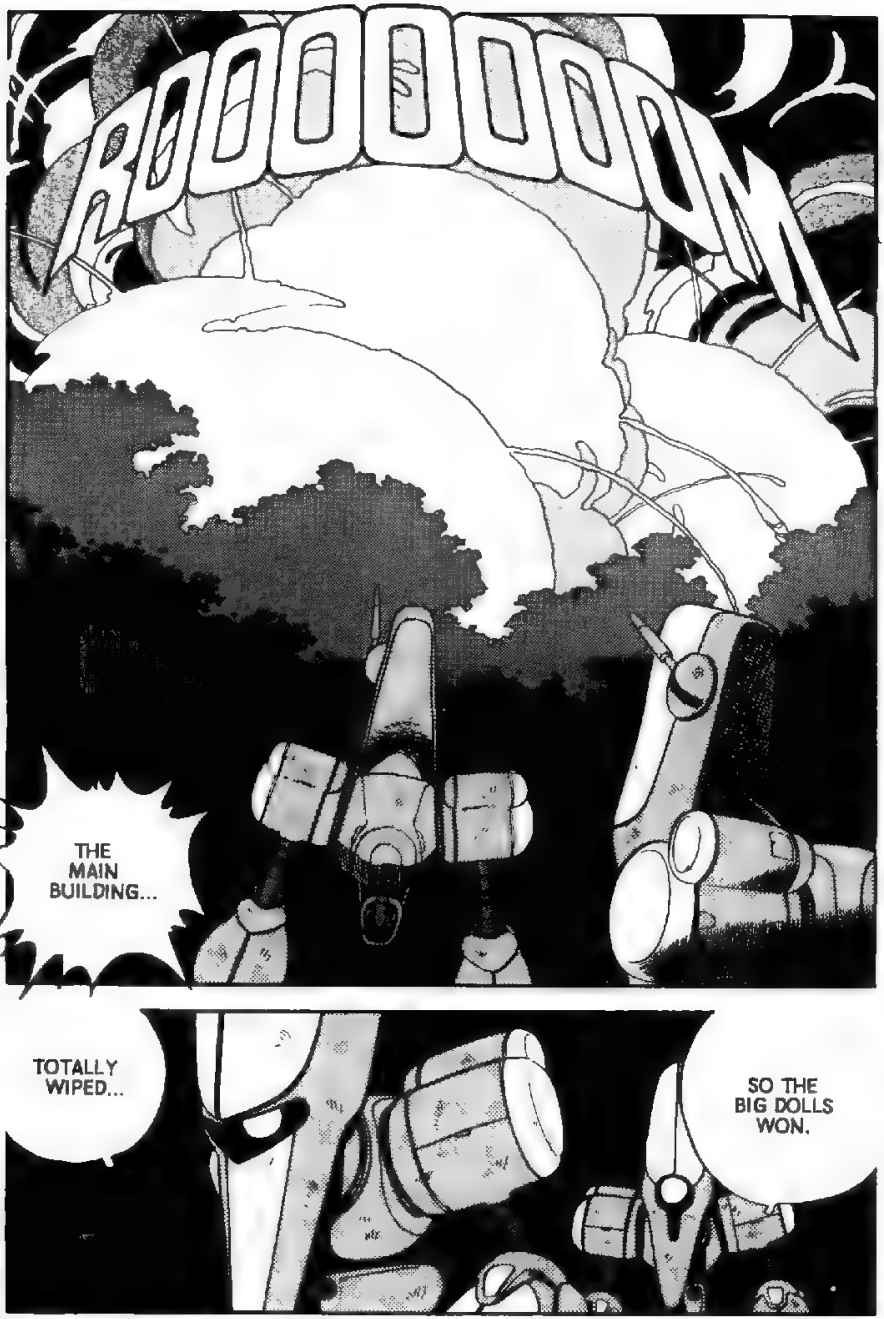
HE MAY BE BADLY INJURED...
...OR MAYBE DEAD.
THE CLINIC'S BEHIND THE OFFERING HALL...
...WE'D HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE DANCE SHRINE...
THUMTHUD
UH-OH.
GRROW
THE BASTARD!
PYEW
PYEW


BREAK THROUGH!
OBWO
OKAY!
RRRAK!
FOM

TURN LEFT THERE!
RYEW
WILL DO.
EEE!!
HYAHH!
GRGM
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

GREY...
!!
THE CLINIC... IT'S...
SH SH SH SH SH
SH SH SH
.....

OH, GREY...
.....
SH-SH SHSHSH
LET'S GO BACK, NOVA.
BUT GREY...
FA!
!?

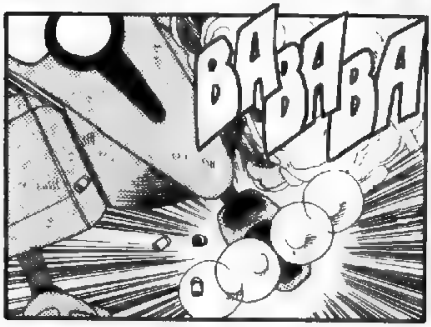

RUUUUUUUM
THE MAIN BUILDING...
TOTALLY WIPED...
SO THE BIG DOLLS WON.

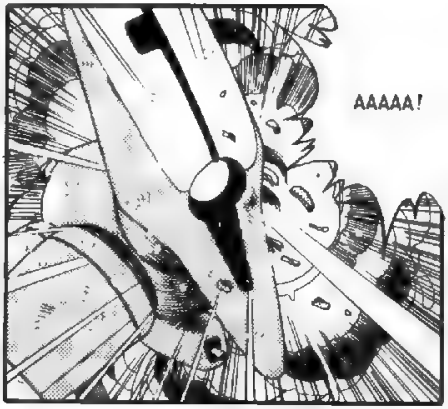
LET'S HEAD BACK.
SURE, GREY.
!!
WHIP
BEEEE
AUGGH!
NOVA!!

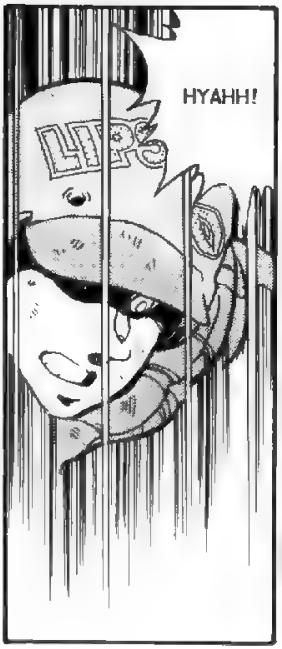
DAMN YOU...
...TO HELL!!
KLANK
THOMP!
UNGH!
ZIP

I WON'T LET YOU!

BEEE-


BABABA


AAAAA!


HYAHH!

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
BEE

UGH!!
BLANG!
WHONK
!!
HEY!
HEY!
vuuuu

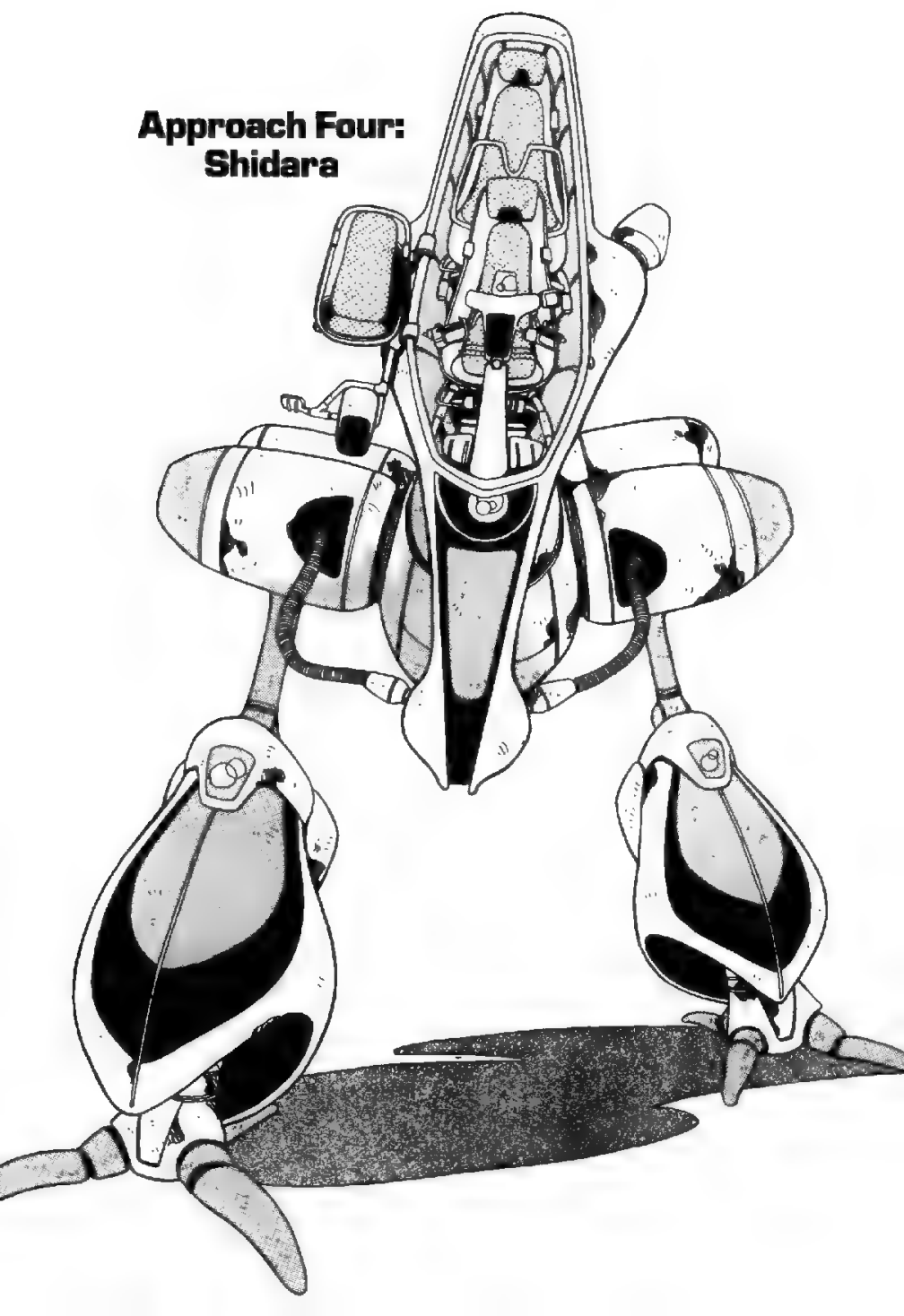
NOW! FIRE!
KLANK
WHO...?
PYEW
...BUT THANKS ANYWAY.
WOOM
DUNNO WHO IT IS...

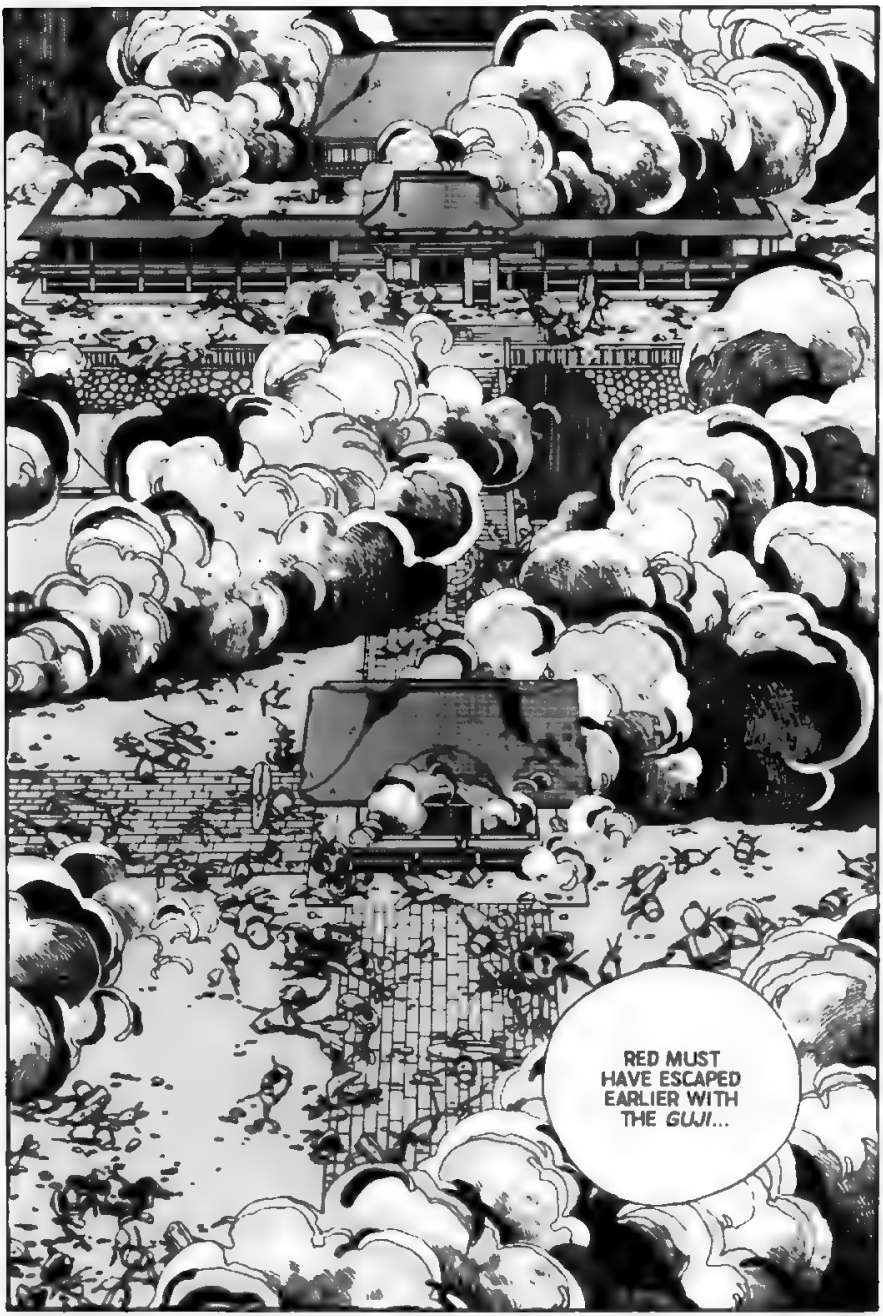
SHASH
SHASHSHASHSHASH
YOU OKAY, BABE?
YEAH... SOMEHOW.
WHERE'S THE GUY WHO SAVED US?
MAYBE HE BOUGHT IT...
DON'T BE STUPID...
I DON'T DIE *THAT* EASY.

DAMN. MY LEG GOT BANGED UP...
GLAD IT WAS JUST YOUR LEG. NOW HOW ABOUT DROPPING YOUR GUN?
!?
SORRY, PAL.
TOO BAD WE DON'T BELONG TO THE RESISTANCE.
BUT... BUT...
WE DON'T BELONG TO THOSE MONSTERS, EITHER.
WE'RE TROOPERS. OPERATING OUT OF TOWN 303.
303? PROVINCIALS?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "PROVINCIALS"?
WHAT ARE 303 TROOPERS DOING OUT HERE?
WE'RE AFTER A GUY YOU PEOPLE TOOK.
GUY WITH A MUSTACHE. ANSWERS TO RED.
RED, YOU SAY?
OKAY, RIGHT... HE SAID HE WAS AN INSPECTOR FROM TOWN 303.
WHERE IS HE?
WHERE *IS* HE?!

Approach Four: Shidara




RED MUST HAVE ESCAPED EARLIER WITH THE *GUJI*...

GUJI?
USED TO MEAN *PRIESTS*. NOW IT'S *RESISTANCE* JARGON. MEANS *COMMANDER*, BASICALLY.
THEY'VE PROBABLY REACHED *NAGOSHI'S* ALTAR...THEIR UH, THEIR *BASE*...BY NOW.
NAGOSHI'S A RESISTANCE GROUP. THIS GROUP HERE IS *SHIDARA*.
SHIDARA...
RESISTANCE GROUP NAMES. LIKE YOUR TOWN NUMBERS.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

LEE.
MINE'S GREY.
AND I'M NOVA.
GREY...?
?
FROM TOWN 303.
SO. YOU'RE GREY DEATH.
YOU KNOW HIM?
OH. FROM RED...
I KNEW ABOUT HIM BEFORE WE FOUND RED.

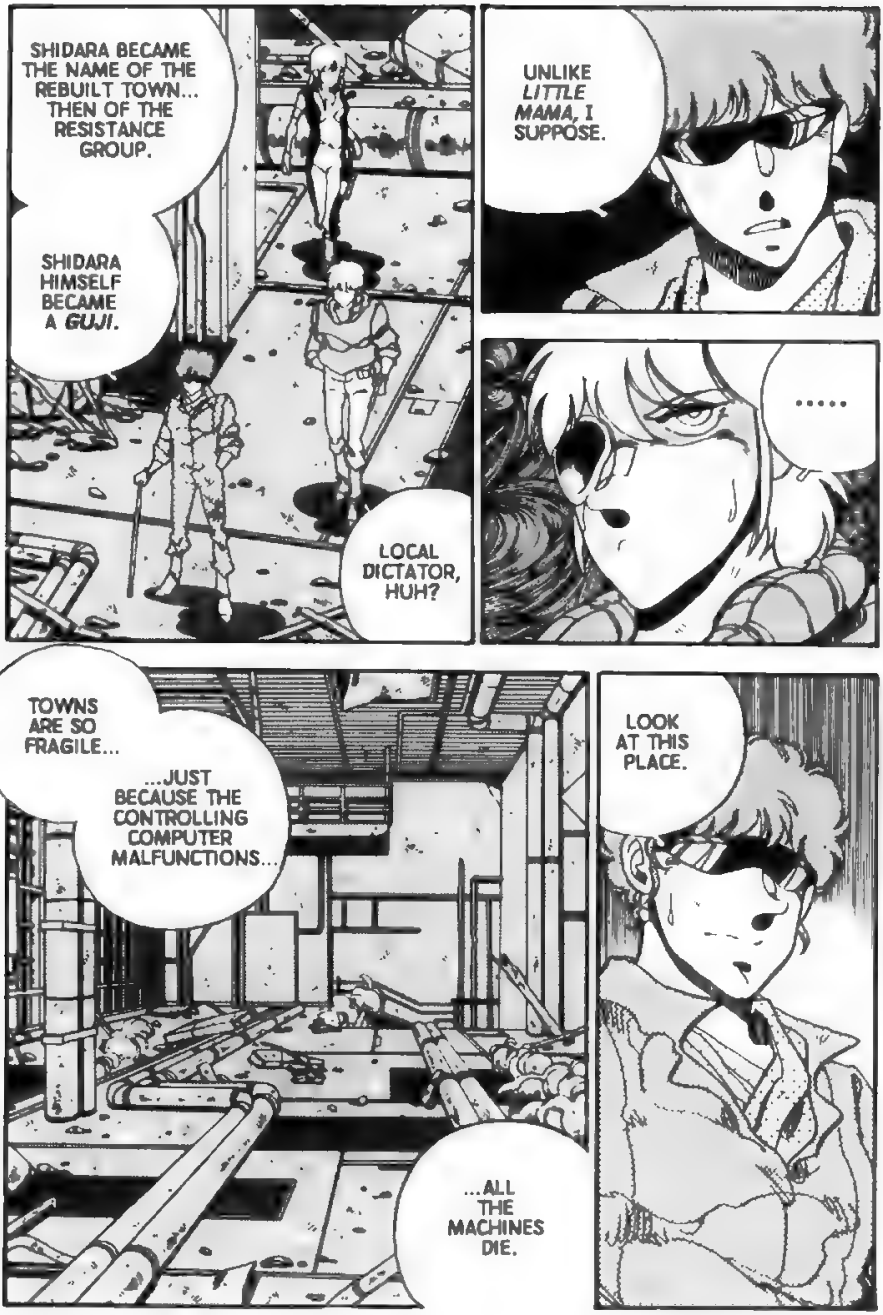
NO RESISTANCE GROUP IN THIS AREA IS DUMB ENOUGH TO TAKE YOU ON.
NOT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO *KUBIKI*...
KUBIKI?
THE GROUP YOU WIPED OUT IN BATTLE THEATER 295.
THEIR FAULT.
THEY HIT ME FIRST. WHO'D FIGHT AN ENEMY YOU CAN'T PULL CREDITS FOR, EVEN WITH A TOTAL WIPE?
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
IS NAGOSHI FAR FROM HERE?
NAGOSHI IS MORE HEAVILY ARMED THAN SHIDARA.

ANYWAY...RED WENT WITH THE GUJI VOLUNTARILY.
CAN'T IMAGINE. WONDER WHY...
BUT WHY...?
WE'RE GOING ANYWAY.
THAT WAY RED CAN ANSWER FOR HIMSELF.
BY THE WAY...WHAT HAPPENS TO ME NOW?
NO DOUBT.
YOU DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE ALONE?

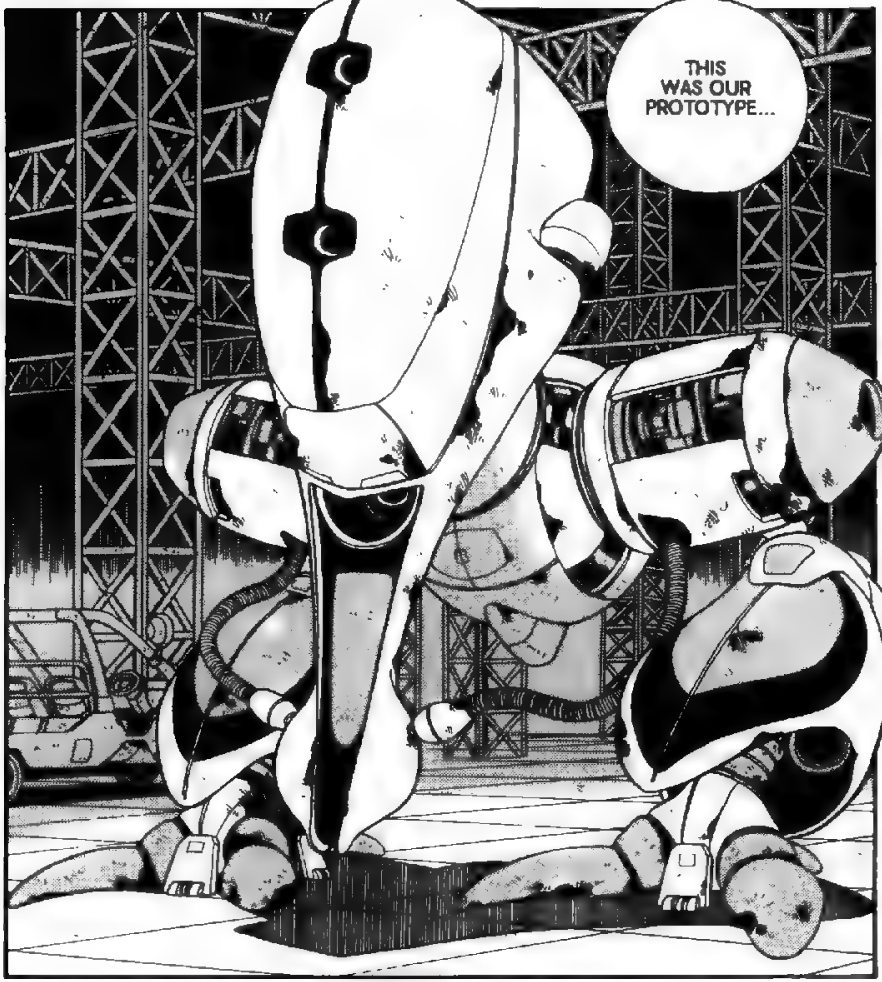
I HOPE WE STILL HAVE SOME WORKING *OHMS.*
LOOK AT THIS... THEY'RE ALL TATTERED.
I'D LIKE TO GET SOME CLEAN CLOTHES.
THERE ARE NO WOMEN IN OUR GROUP.
SO YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GET A CHANGE OF UNDERWEAR.
I WONDER IF I'D HAVE TIME TO TAKE A QUICK SHOWER...
I WOULDN'T COUNT ON IT...
DO YOU HAVE HOT WATER?
YOU CALL THESE THINGS *GARBS?*

THE BIG ONE GIVING THE ORDERS WAS CALLED *LEONARD*.
THEY'RE ANTI-RESISTANCE WEAPONS FROM TOWN 50.
LEONARD WAS THE ONLY ONE WITH A HUMAN IN IT.
TOWN 50...
EVERY TOWN WITH A ONE- OR TWO-DIGIT NUMBER HAS THESE SPECIAL WEAPONS.
TOWN 50'S STILL POORLY ARMED COMPARED TO SOME OF THE OTHERS.
BUT EVEN THEY HAD ENOUGH TO LEVEL SHIDARA.
WHICH MEANS SHIDARA WASN'T MUCH EITHER.
WELL, THIS ISN'T YOUR FIGHT.
LOOKS LIKE THE SUB-STRUCTURE IS WIPED OUT, TOO.
ドドド

BUT... BUT...
...HOW DID THE RESISTANCE GET ALL THIS?
THIS IS WHAT'S LEFT OF A *TOWN.*
THE *LITTLE MAMA* FOR THE TOWN BROKE DOWN.
MOST OF THE PEOPLE DIED.
THE SURVIVORS PULLED OUT... ABANDONED IT.
THEY HAD TROOPERS OUT IN A BATTLE THEATER. THE LAND-CARRIER NEVER CAME FOR THEM. THEY HIKED BACK...FOUND TOWN 424 DEAD.
THOSE TROOPERS REBUILT THE TOWN, WAITING FOR THE DAY WHEN THE TOWNSPEOPLE WOULD COME BACK...
THE ONE WHO LED THEM WAS A CLASS-B TROOPER NAMED SHIDARA.


SHIDARA BECAME THE NAME OF THE REBUILT TOWN... THEN OF THE RESISTANCE GROUP.
SHIDARA HIMSELF BECAME A *GUJI*.
LOCAL DICTATOR, HUH?
UNLIKE *LITTLE MAMA*, I SUPPOSE.
.....
TOWNS ARE SO FRAGILE...
...JUST BECAUSE THE CONTROLLING COMPUTER MALFUNCTIONS...
...ALL THE MACHINES DIE.
LOOK AT THIS PLACE.

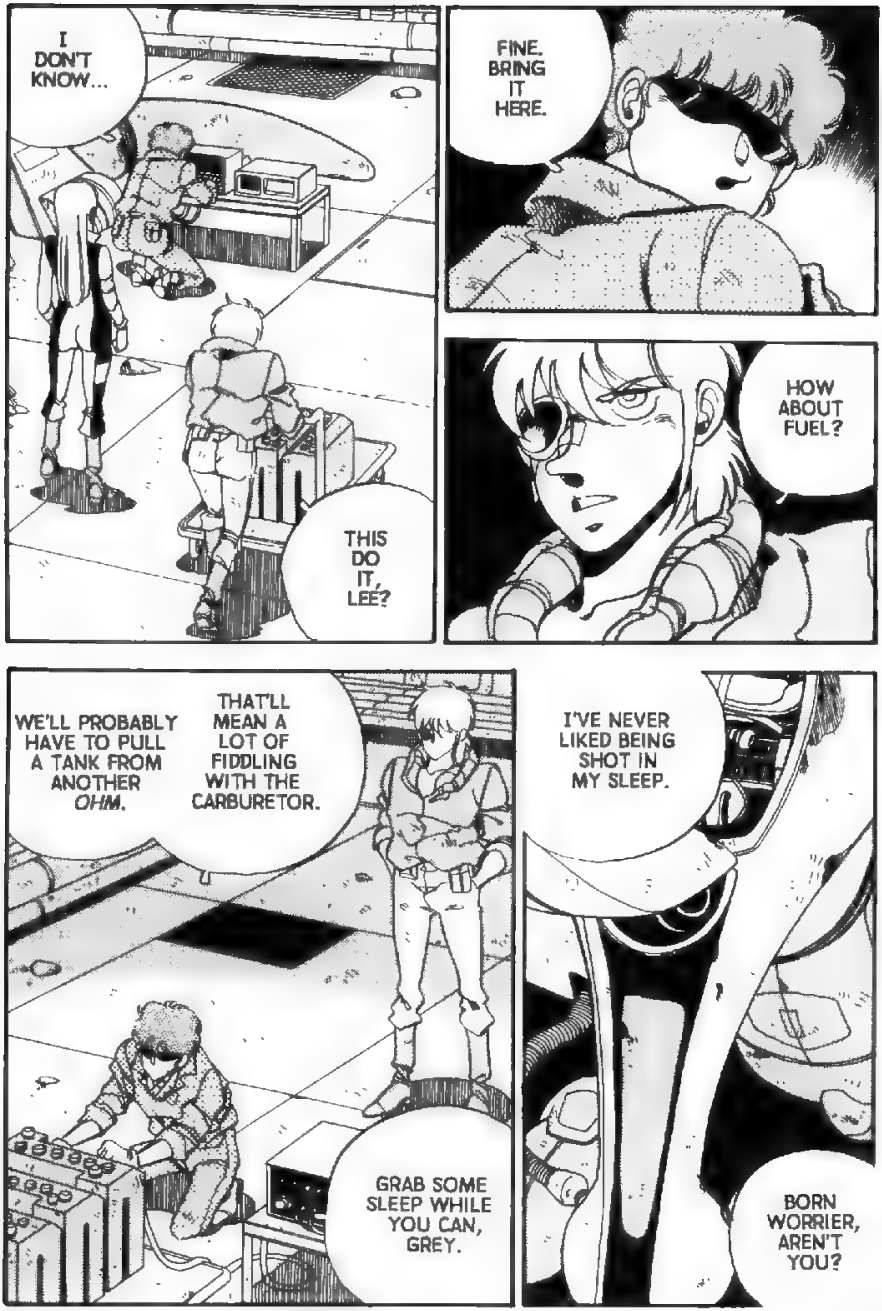
HOW DID I SURVIVE THIS?
MAYBE BECAUSE YOU SAVED *DEATH.*
MUST BE.
SO WHAT DO WE DO?
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE...
...*WAIT!* THERE IS SOMETHING!
WE DON'T HAVE A CHANCE IN HELL OF FINDING AN *OHM* IN GOOD SHAPE.


THIS WAS OUR PROTOTYPE...

WILL IT GO?
WELL, IT WAS *MEANT* TO GO.
SOUNDS RISKY TO ME...

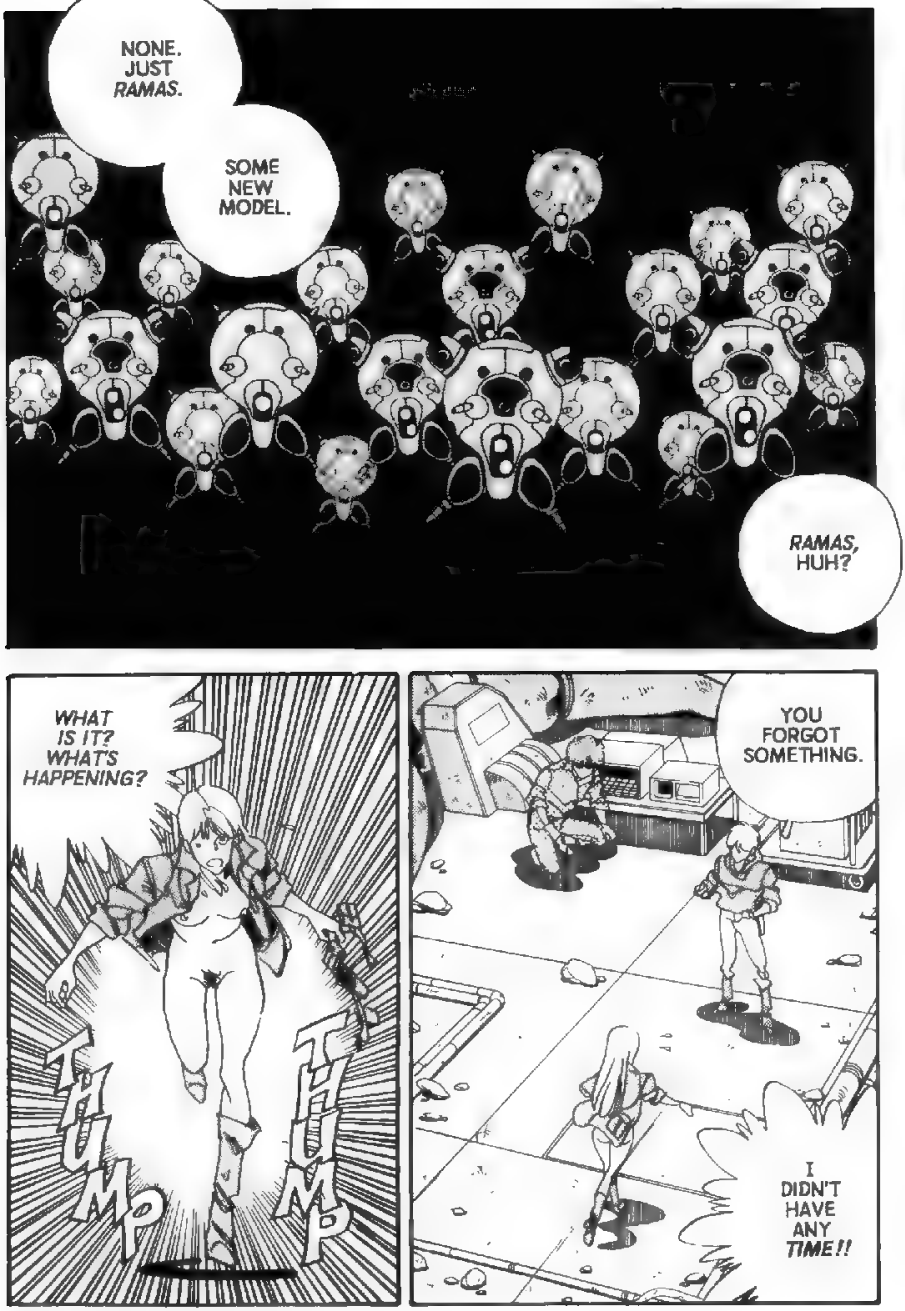
LET'S TRY IT OUT.
GREY, CAN YOU FIND AN *OHM* BATTERY LYING AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE?
WILL DO.
HOW ABOUT MY CLEAN CLOTHES?
JUST PULL SOME OFF A DEAD B--
THE LAUNDRY ROOM'S DOWN THE HALL.
THERE'S A SHOWER ROOM NEXT TO IT.
THANK YOU.
WE'RE DEEPLY INDEBTED TO YOU.
PLEASE. SPARE ME THE FORMALITIES.

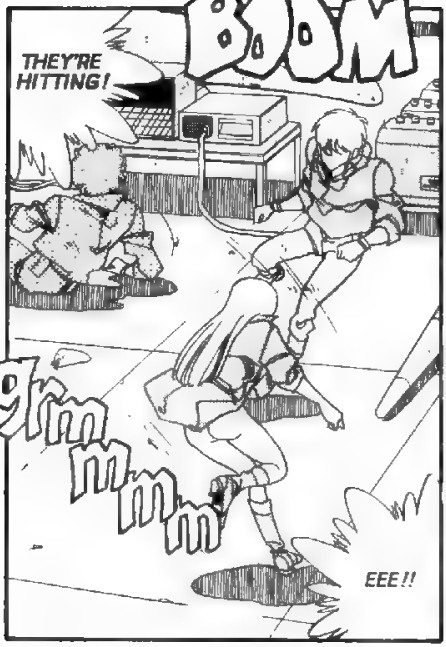
IF YOU SAY SO.
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
YOUR NAME'S *NOVA*, RIGHT?
UH-HUH. WHY DO YOU ASK?
NO REASON...
I JUST HAVEN'T SEEN A WOMAN FOR...
...ABOUT EIGHT THOUSAND HOURS.
DO YOU... HAVE A FAMILY?
WELL, I *HAD* A WIFE...
DID SHE DIE?


I DON'T KNOW...
THIS DO IT, LEE?
FINE. BRING IT HERE.
HOW ABOUT FUEL?
WE'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO PULL A TANK FROM ANOTHER *OHM*.
THAT'LL MEAN A LOT OF FIDDLING WITH THE CARBURETOR.
GRAB SOME SLEEP WHILE YOU CAN, GREY.
I'VE NEVER LIKED BEING SHOT IN MY SLEEP.
BORN WORRIER, AREN'T YOU?

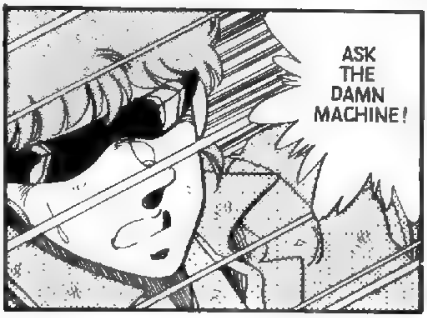
I'D RATHER BE CALLED A COWARD.
SOUNDS LIKE WE'RE MEANT FOR EACH OTHER.
I'M GONNA GO TAKE A SHOWER.
YEAH? WELL, I'M JUST A BIG SISSY TOO.
NOVA'S USING THE SHOWER ROOM.
I'VE NEVER GONE FOR CHIVALRY.
BEEP
!!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
!!
.....

THE ENEMY?
BEEP BEEP
MOST LIKELY.
MUST BE MOP-UP SQUADS.
PROBABLY DON'T DREAM THERE'S ONLY THREE OF US LEFT TO FIGHT.
YOU SEE THAT?
A *SWARM* OF THE THINGS.
ANY HUMANS IN THERE?


NONE. JUST *RAMAS.*
SOME NEW MODEL.
RAMAS, HUH?
WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THUMP
THUMP
YOU FORGOT SOMETHING.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANY *TIME!!*


BOOM
THEY'RE HITTING!
grmmmm
EEE!!

WHEN DO WE GET STARTED, LEE?

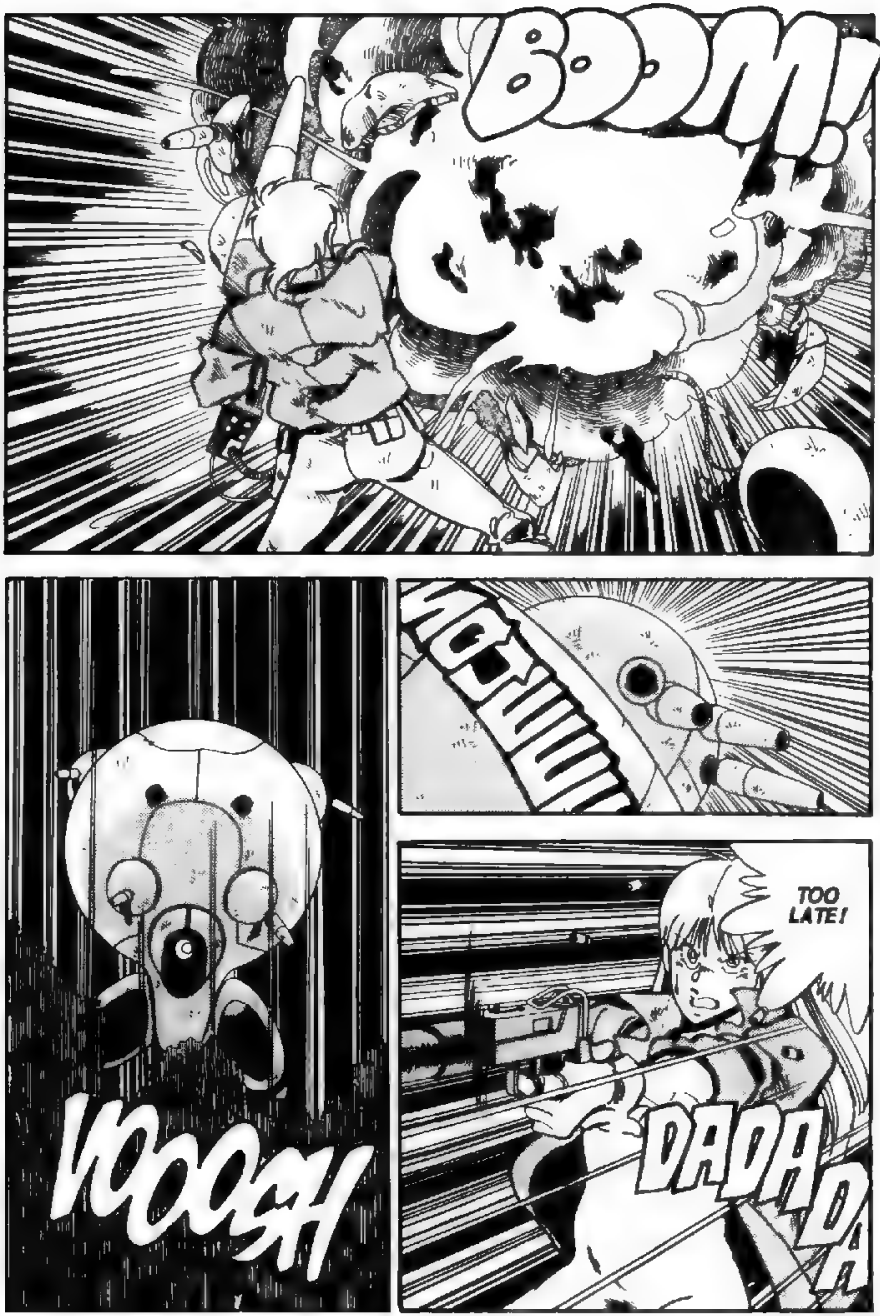

ASK THE DAMN MACHINE!

FIVE MINUTES, LEE! THAT'S ALL!
THUMP
MOVE IT, NOVA!

LET ME PUT MY UNDERWEAR ON!

IF YOU WANT TO DIE!

WHY WOULD I DIE IF I PUT MY UNDERWEAR ON?
BECAUSE I'D LOSE MY WILL TO FIGHT.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
SURE, KID. SURE.
HEADS UP!
NAK
ZOOM
BAM


BOOM!
VOOOSH
TOO LATE!
DADADA

Geeee
WOOM!
CAN'T KILL ME...
Ba-BOOM!
YA-AAMMM
...'CAUSE I'M THE HERO!

VOOOM
HUH?
GREY!
FIRE!!
DA DA DA DA DA
SPRING

YOU FIGHT BETTER WITHOUT YOUR CLOTHES.
BOOM!
NICE SHOT!
DADADA
BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO DIE *NAKED!*
BA-BOOM!

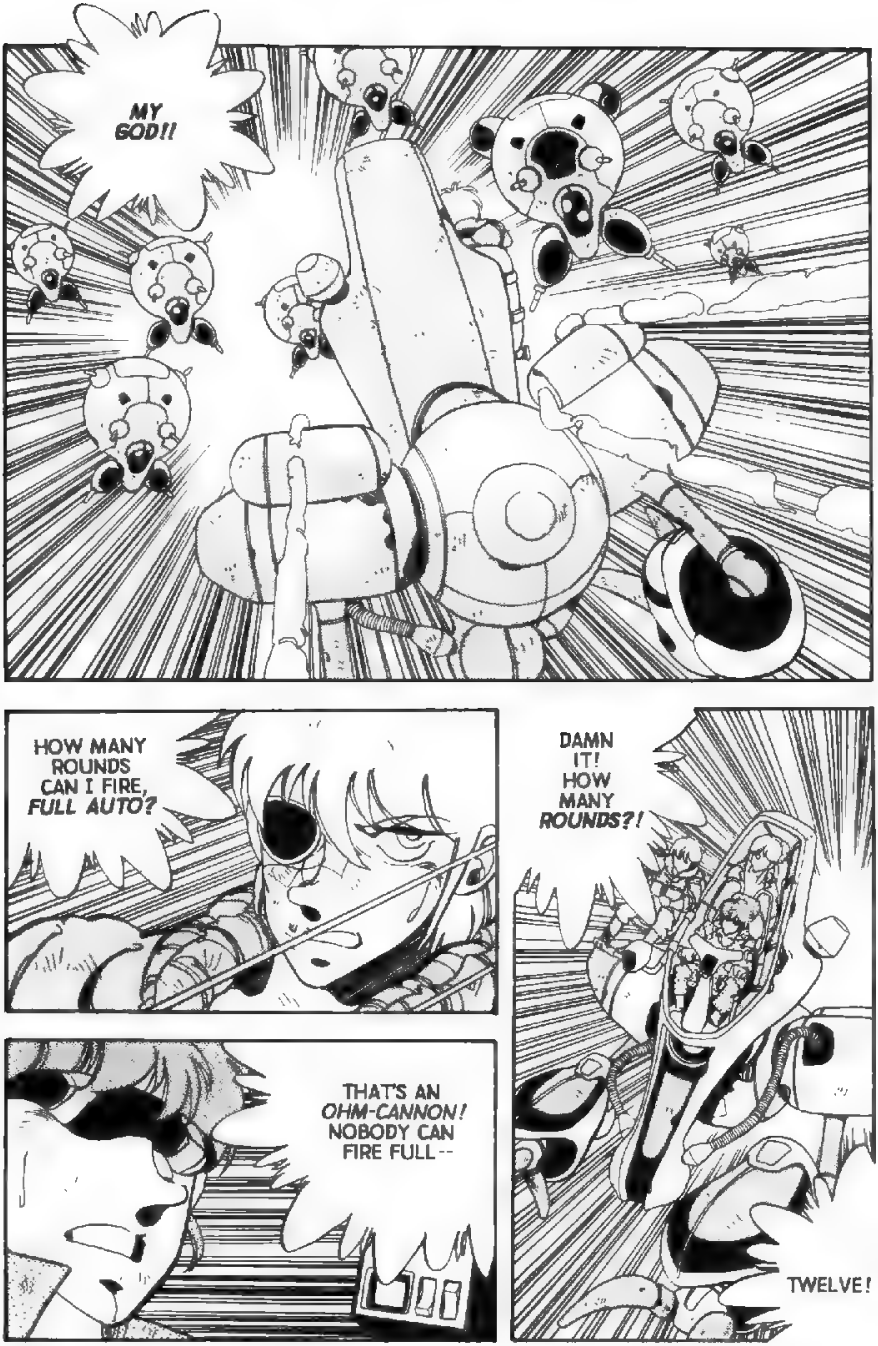
DAMN IT ALL...
THERE'S TOO MANY OF 'EM!
BOW!
GREY!
GET DOWN!
!!

GREAT. BATTERY'S DEAD.
EEE-YOW!!
K-WOOOOM!

TOMP
TOMP TOMP
HOW'S MY TIMING?
HOW'D YOU GUESS?
LEE.
WERE YOU WAITING FOR YOUR CUE?
YOU GOT A HELLUVA STYLE, BOY...

NOW... WE BEGIN!
VROOM!
JUST DO IT!
GREY... HERE'S A NEW BATTERY!
WELL, IT IS A PROTOTYPE...
GOT IT...
SAY... ISN'T THIS OHM ARMED?

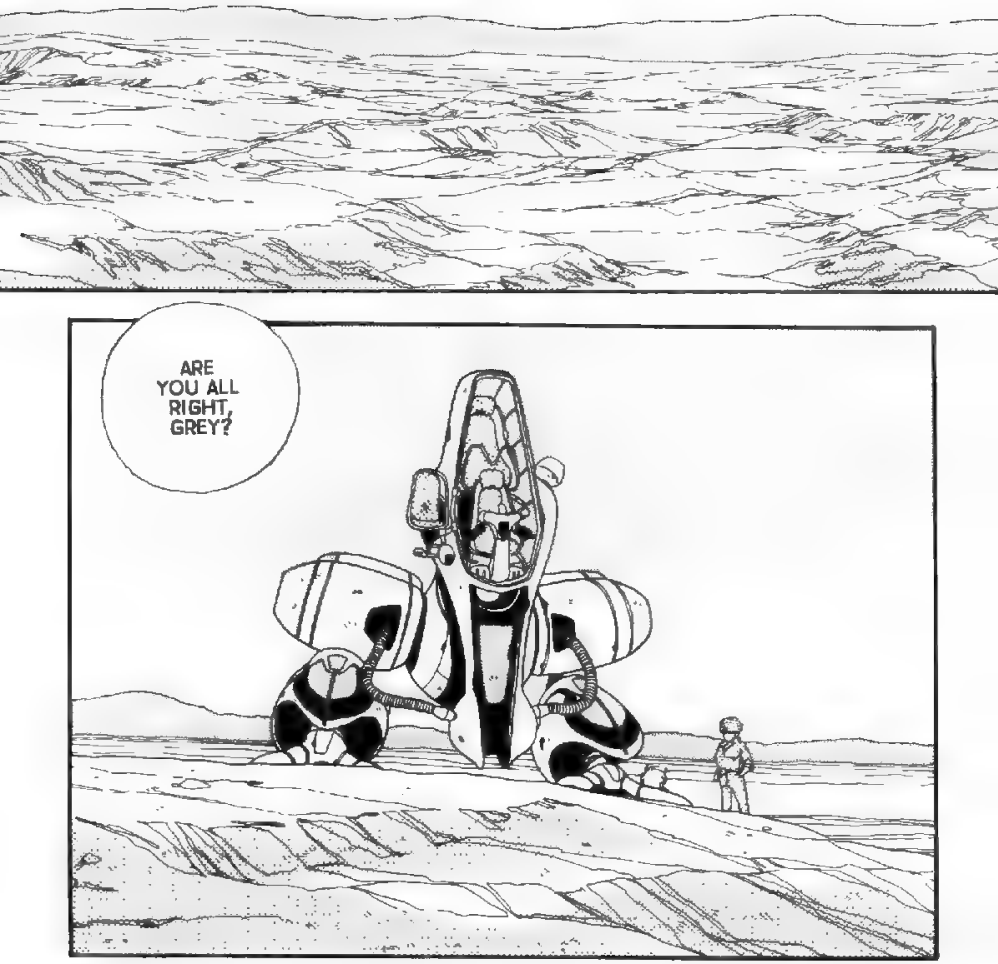
NO KIDDING...
FORWARD RIGHT!
ZAKI
I GOT EYES.
BOOM
WHOMP!

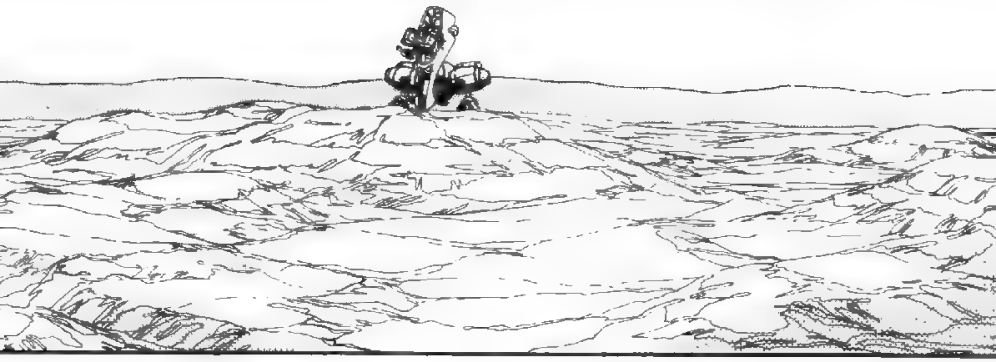

MY GOD!!
HOW MANY ROUNDS CAN I FIRE, FULL AUTO?
DAMN IT! HOW MANY ROUNDS?!
THAT'S AN OHM-CANNON! NOBODY CAN FIRE FULL--
TWELVE!

HOLD TIGHT, NOVA!
NOW!!
BABABABABA

BA BA BA

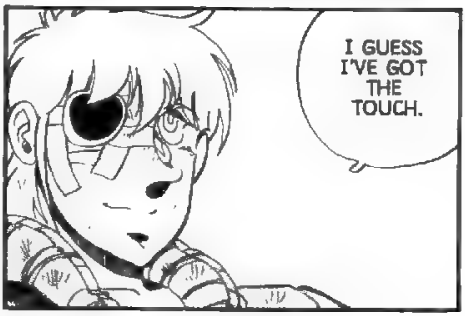
Approach Five:
Nagoshi, First Encounter


ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, GREY?



SO THAT WAS AN *OHM CANNON*, HUH?
YOU'VE BROKEN A COUPLE OF RIBS.

A NORMAL MAN WOULD BE DEAD.

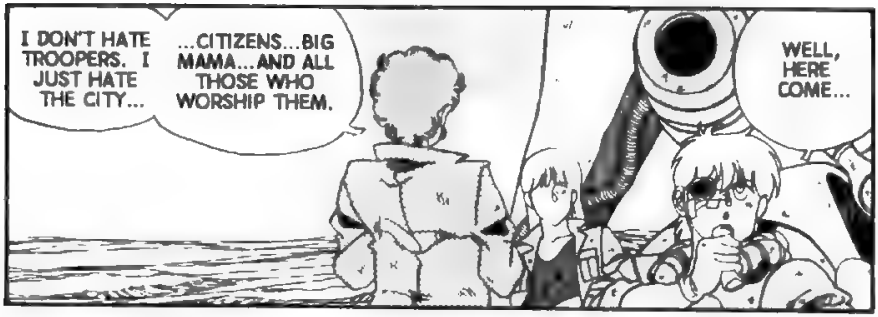

I GUESS I'VE GOT THE TOUCH.

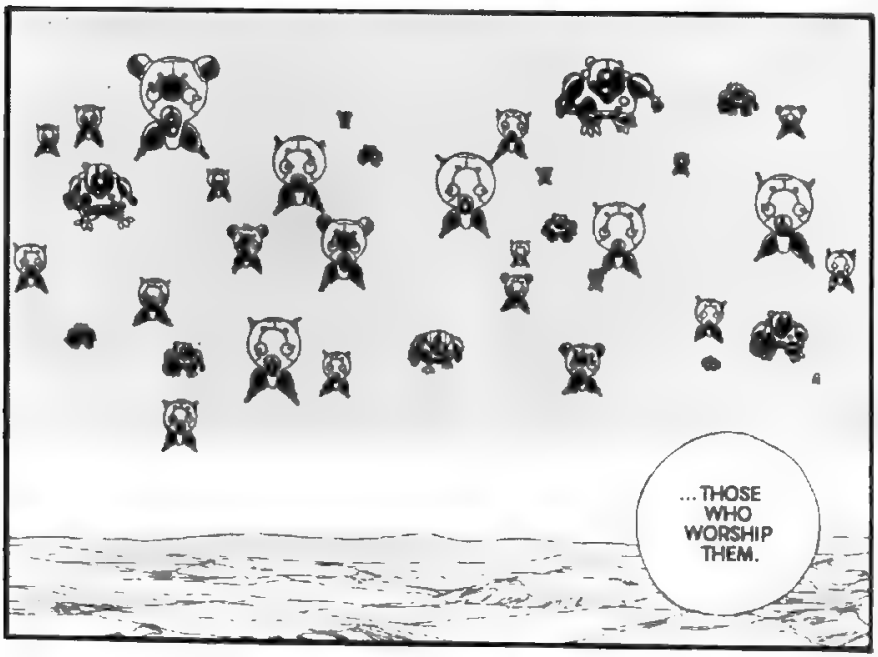
BUT I'LL DO BETTER NEXT TIME...
...AFTER THE OLD RIBS HEAL.
I HOPE THE ENEMY DOESN'T HIT US BEFORE THEN.
HOW LONG TO GET FROM HERE TO *NAGOSHI?*
NAGOSHI'S A FLOATING BASE... PERMANENTLY IN THE AIR.
AND THE RADAR'S JAMMED, TOO. USELESS.
BUT WE HAVE AN ELECTRONIC TRACER.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS TRACE RED'S *I.D. CARD*...

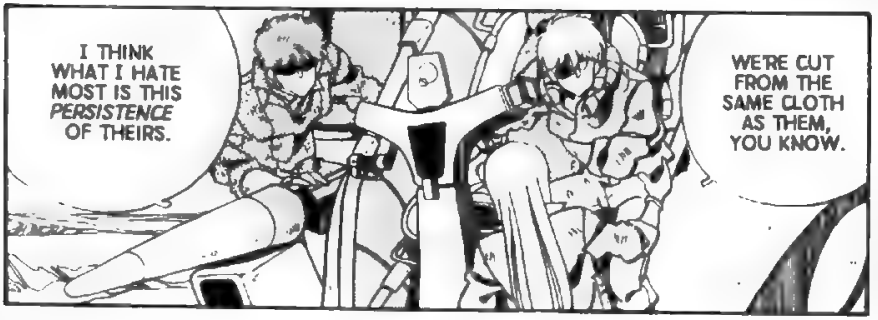
GIVE IT A TRY.
.....
.....
RED BECAME A MEMBER OF THE RESISTANCE.
AND *WE* DON'T HAVE TO CARRY I.D. CARDS. GET IT?
WHY'D HE DO IT?
WHY'D HE LEAVE *TOWN 303*, YOU MEAN?
NO. WHY'D HE GIVE UP THE RIGHT TO BECOME A *CITIZEN*?

ASK YOURSELF... WHAT *IS* A CITIZEN?
WHAT'S A *CITY*, REALLY?
WEREN'T YOU A *TROOPER*, ONCE? TOWN 424?
YEP. JOINED THE TROOPERS TO BECOME A CITIZEN...
JUST LIKE THE REST OF US.
SO WHAT'LL YOU DO AFTER YOU'RE MADE A CITIZEN?
I'M GOING TO MOVE INTO THE *CITY*...
...WHERE I WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT IN ANY MORE OPERATIONS.
SO WHAT ARE YOU REALLY FIGHTING FOR?
WE'RE FIGHTING TO GET INTO THE...
YOU'RE SAYING, IF NOT FOR THE *CITY*...

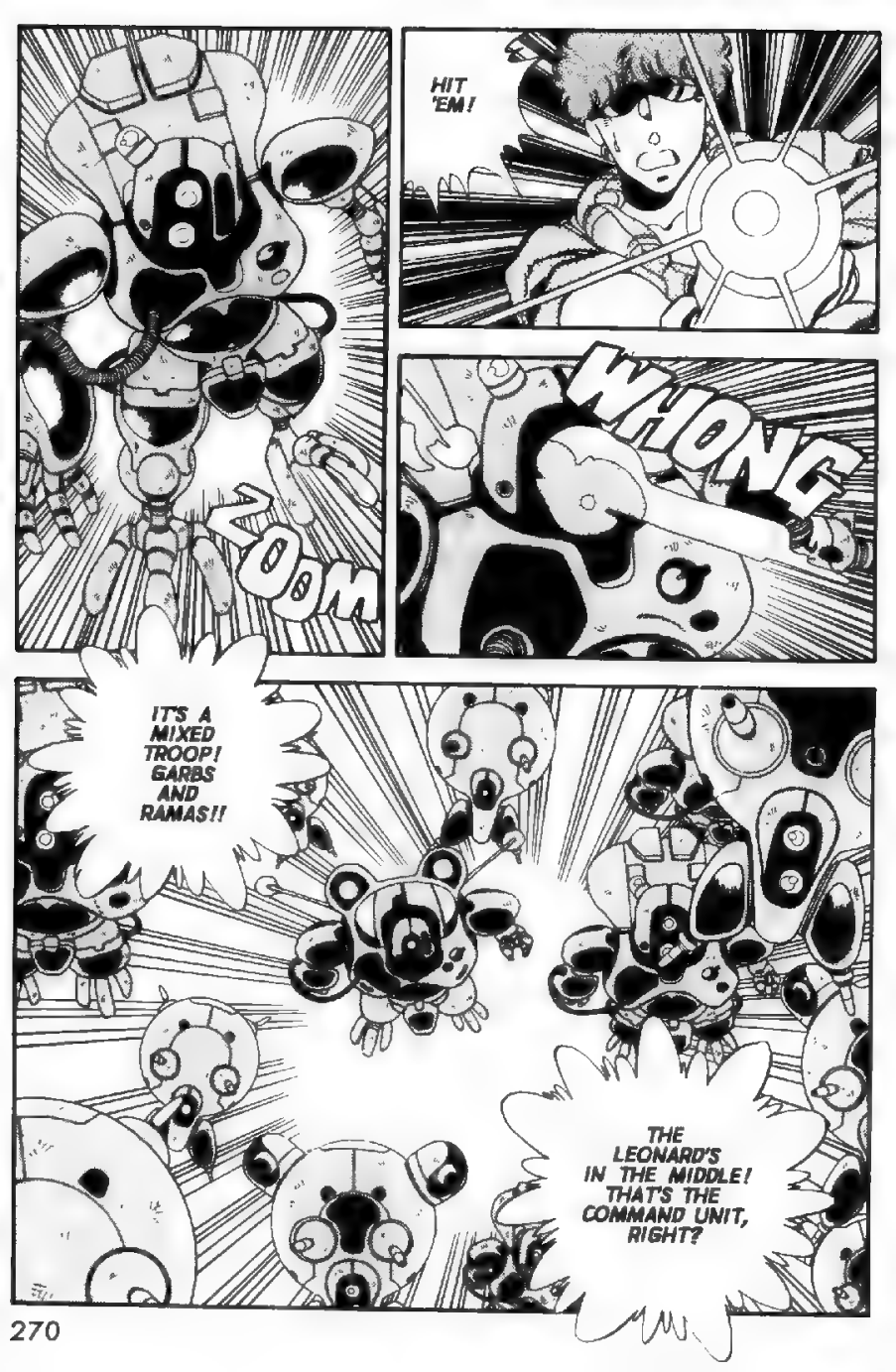
ONCE, IN TOWN 424, 5,200 TROOPERS AND 47,700 REGULAR PEOPLE...
...THAT'S 52,900 MEN AND WOMEN...WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR RIGHT TO CITIZENSHIP IN AN INSTANT.
ALL BECAUSE OF A TINY *GLITCH* IN *LITTLE MAMA*.
JUST ONE OF THOSE COMPUTER ERRORS...IN ONE OF THOSE LITTLE TOWN TERMINALS.
CAN YOU TELL ME THAT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN TO *BIG MAMA?* THAT IT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN IN THE *CITY?*
MOST RESISTANCE GROUPS...LIKE SHIDARA AND NAGOSHI...
...ARE MADE UP OF PEOPLE WHO HAD THEIR RIGHTS STRIPPED WITHOUT WARNING.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU HATE TROOPERS?

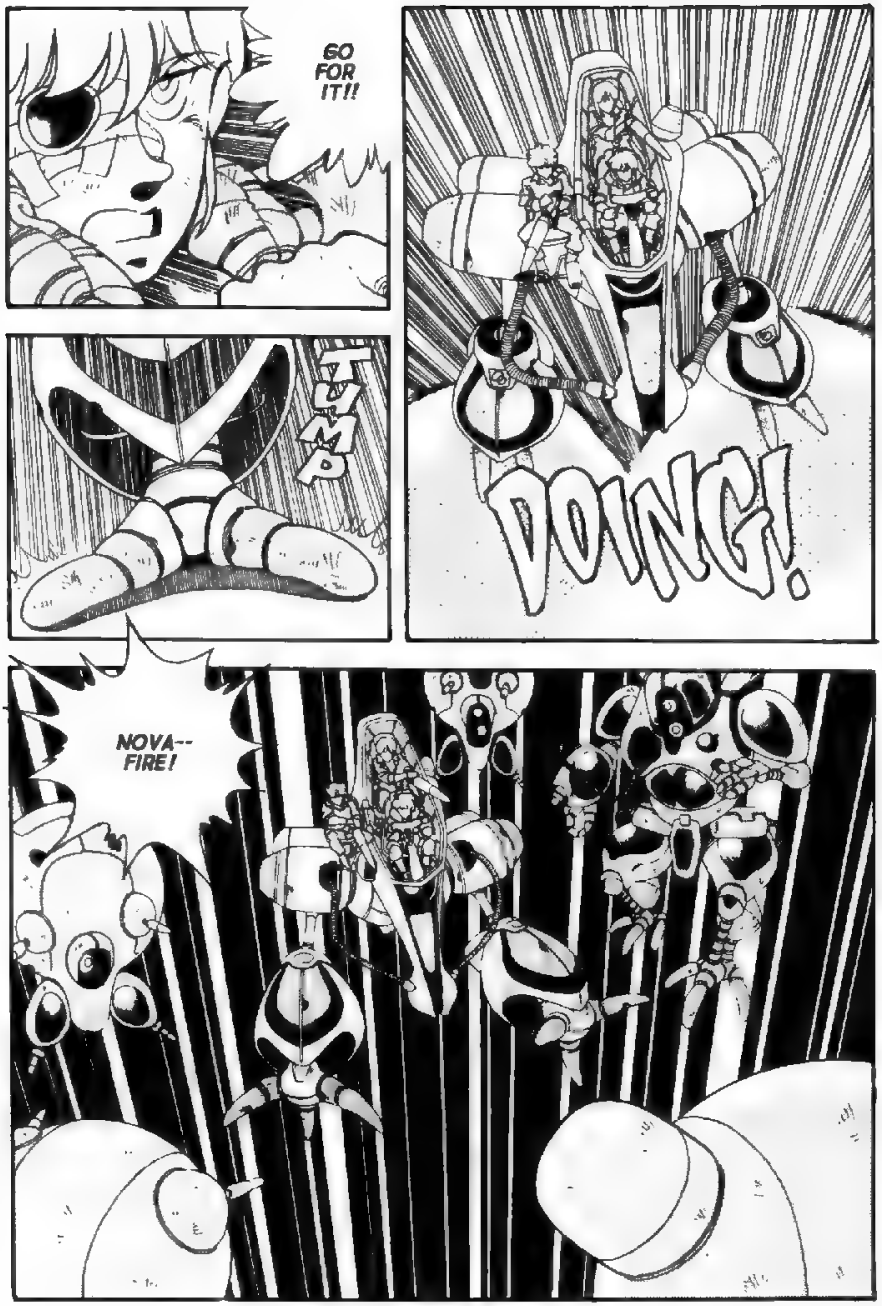

I DON'T HATE TROOPERS. I JUST HATE THE CITY...
...CITIZENS...BIG MAMA...AND ALL THOSE WHO WORSHIP THEM.
WELL, HERE COME...

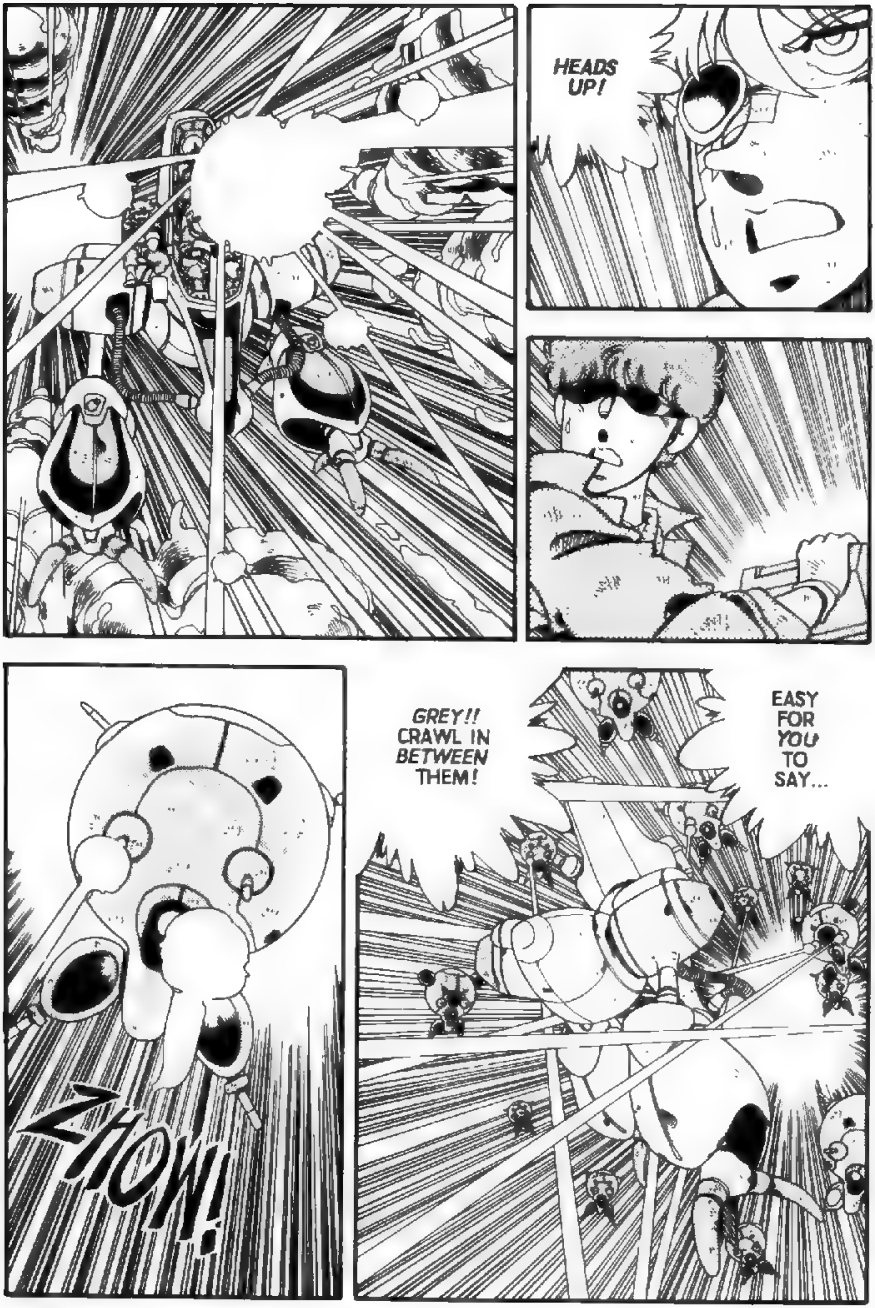

...THOSE WHO WORSHIP THEM.


I THINK WHAT I HATE MOST IS THIS *PERSISTENCE* OF THEIRS.
WE'RE CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH AS THEM, YOU KNOW.

ARE YOU REALLY?
ARE YOUR *RIBS* ALL RIGHT, GREY?
WELL... UNTIL YESTERDAY...
VROW
IF THEY'RE NOT, WE'LL DIE TOGETHER.
I LASHED THE REAR CANNON TO THE BAR, NOVA...SO YOU CAN'T FIRE TO THE SIDES.
YEAH, I CAN SEE THAT.
VEEEEEEEE
I HOOKED THE CANNONS' BATTERIES STRAIGHT TO THE *OHM*, SO YOU CAN FIRE THIRTY ROUNDS, FULL AUTO. IF YOU TRY TO FIRE MORE YOU--
EYES FRONT!

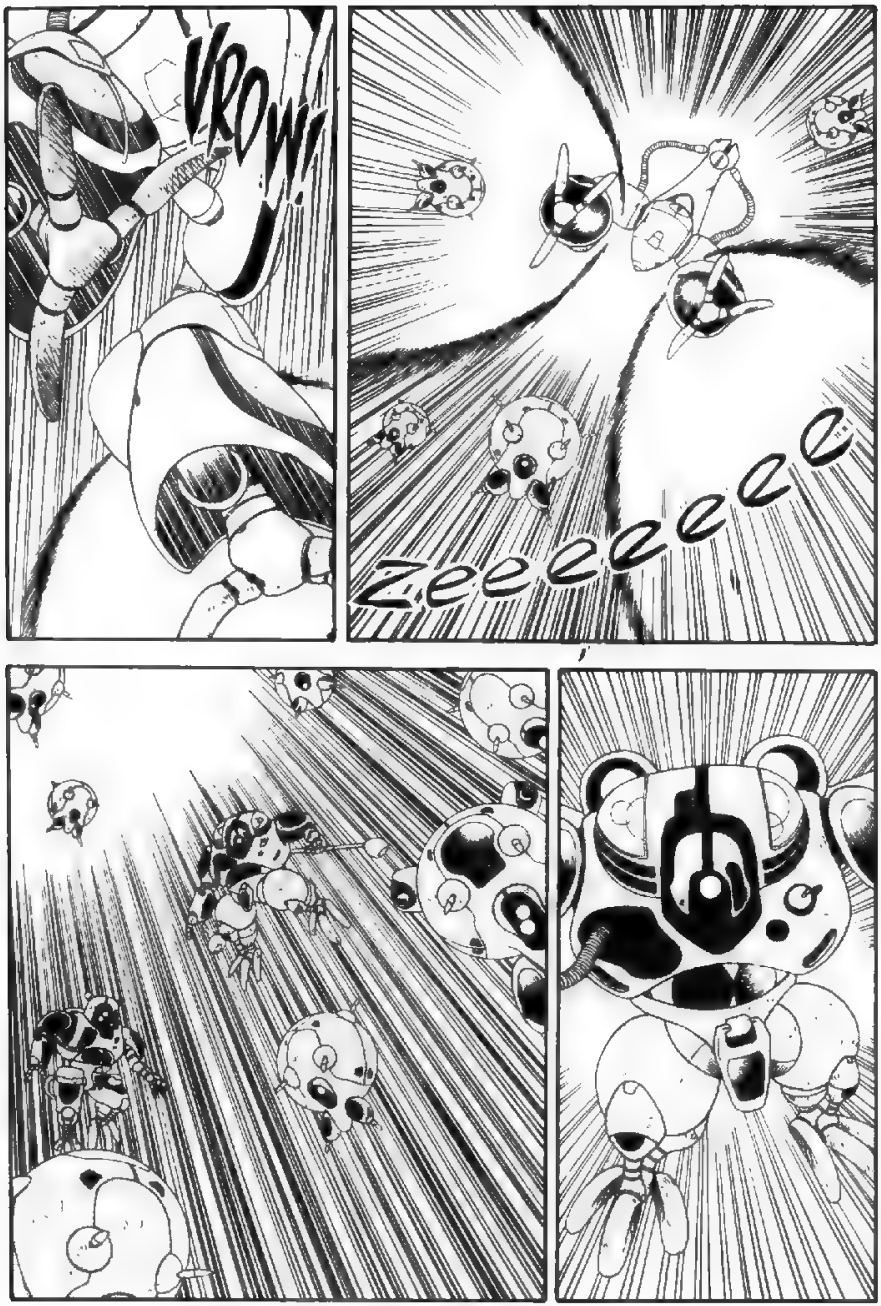

ZOOM
HIT 'EM!
WHONG
IT'S A MIXED TROOP! GARBS AND RAMAS!!
THE LEONARD'S IN THE MIDDLE! THAT'S THE COMMAND UNIT, RIGHT?

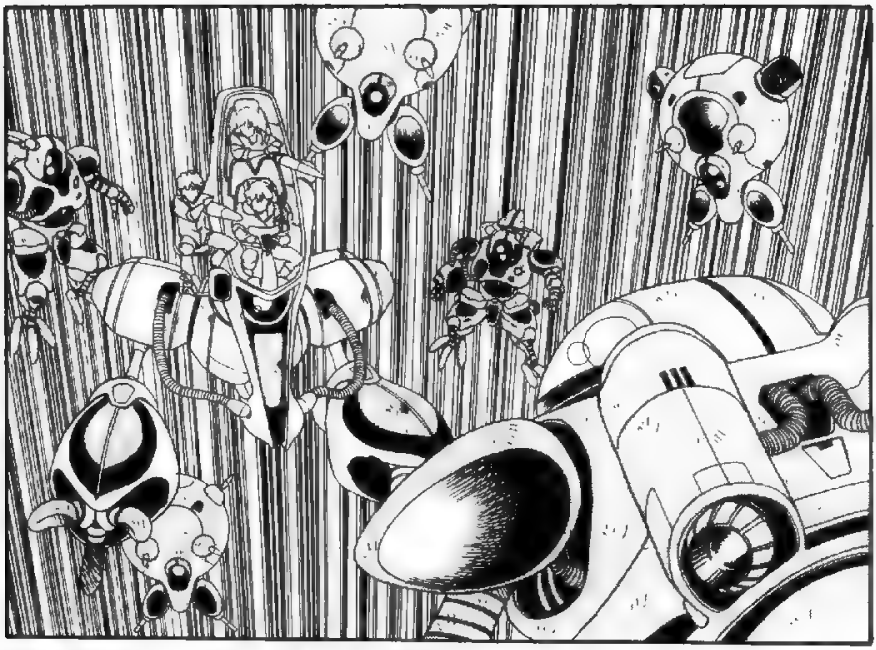

GO FOR IT!!
DOING!
THUMP
NOVA-- FIRE!

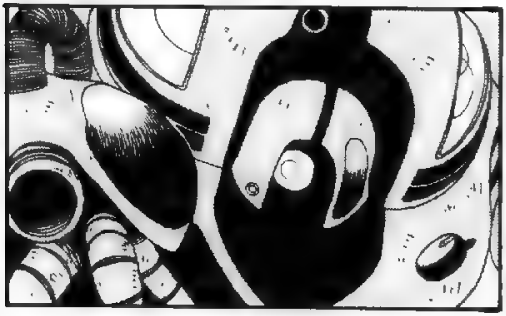

HEADS UP!
GREY!! CRAWL IN BETWEEN THEM!
EASY FOR YOU TO SAY...
ZTOW!

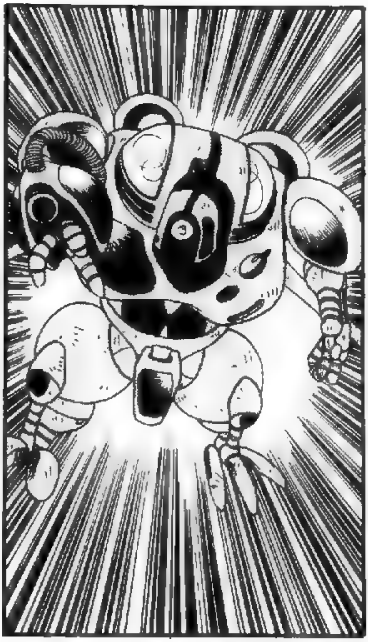
GET OUT!
GET OUT OF MY WAY!!
KLOMP!

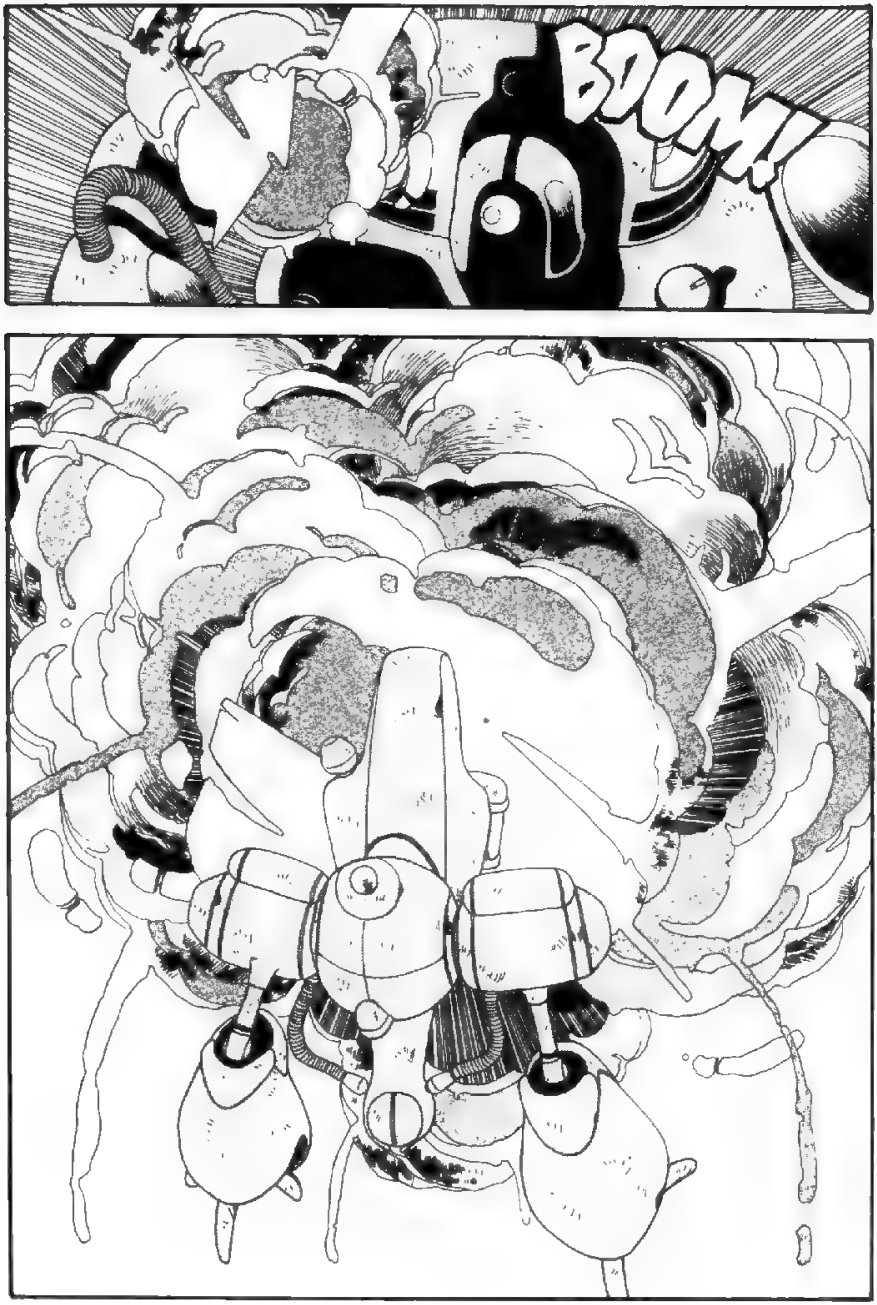
VROOOOM!
EAT DUST, ASSHOLE!
GREY! WE'RE UNDER LEONARD!
ALL RIGHT...
VM VM VM
...LET'S JUMP!!


VROW!
Zeeeeeee








BOOM!!

GREY, LOOK!!
THEY'RE... THEY'RE RETREATING.
WELL, THEY'RE JUST MACHINES...
...DESTROY THEIR COMMAND SYSTEM AND ALL THEY KNOW HOW TO DO IS GO HOME.
THE CATCH IS... NEXT TIME.

THEY'VE COLLECTED MORE THAN ENOUGH INFO ON OUR STRENGTH...
NO FOOLIN'...
...I FEEL LIKE *SHIT*.
SHYUMP
HEY, LISTEN, GREY...YOU'RE LOOKING *PALE*...
HOW IS HE?
I'M NOT SURE, BUT...NOT WELL.

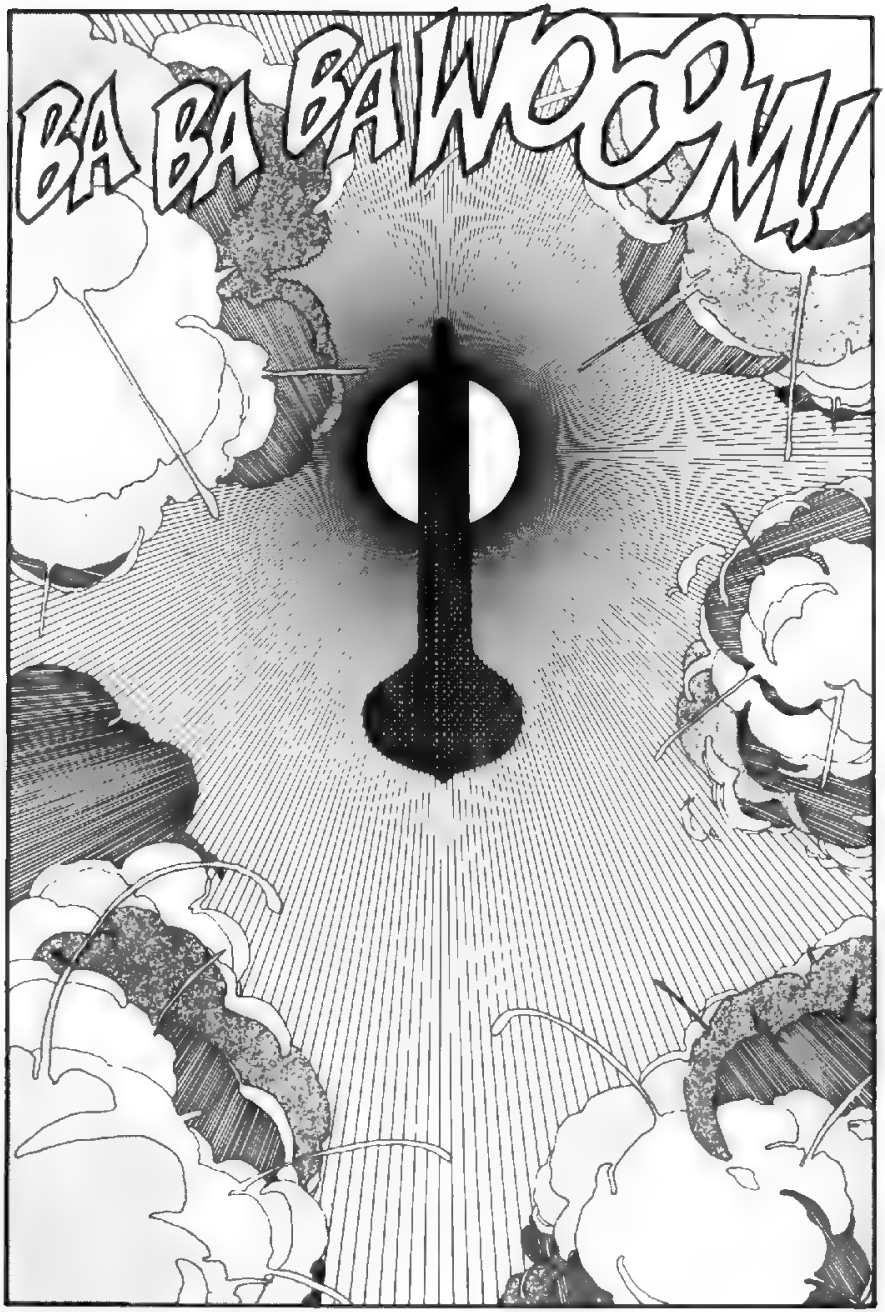
I THINK HIS BROKEN RIBS MUST BE PUSHING INTO HIS LUNGS.
HMM... I SEE...
THERE'S... THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO HERE.
BE SMART. LEAVE ME HERE.
THAT'D BE ASKING FOR TROUBLE.
IF IT'S JUST NOVA AND ME...
...HOW ARE WE GOING TO EVADE TOWN 50'S STRIKE AND REACH NAGOSHI?
IT'LL BE THE SAME WITH ME ALONG.
WELL, IF IT'S ALL THE SAME... I'LL BRING YOU.
WHY DO YOU WANT TO DO THAT?
BECAUSE I DON'T WANT *NOVA* KILLED.

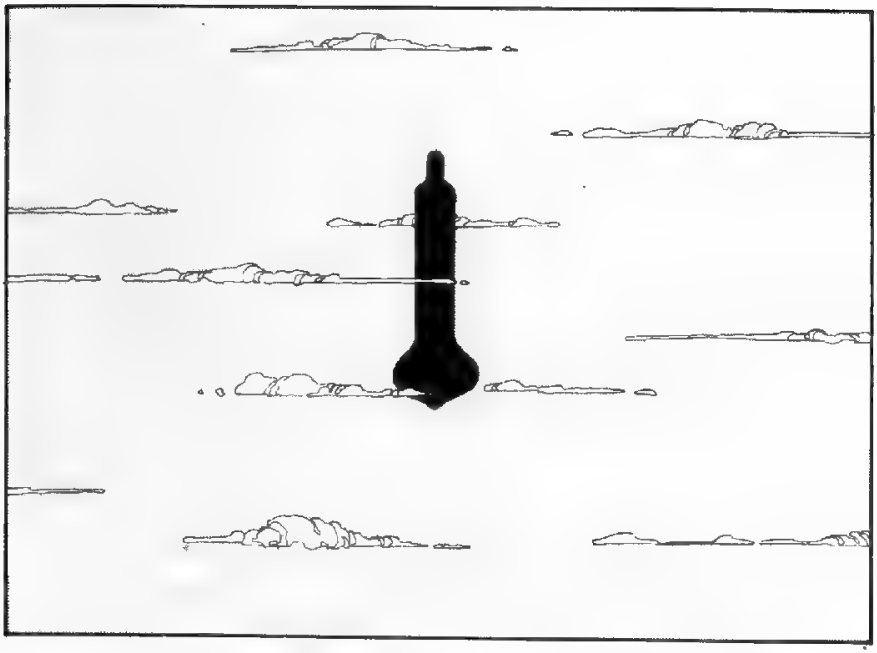
IF I LEAVE YOU HERE, NOVA WILL STAY TOO.
AND STAYING WILL GET HER KILLED.
SO. YOU IN LOVE WITH HER?
WHAT?
THAT'S A GOOD ONE.
I DON'T LOOK IT... BUT I'M A MARRIED MAN.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T FALL FOR HER...
...DOES IT?
THEY'RE COMING.

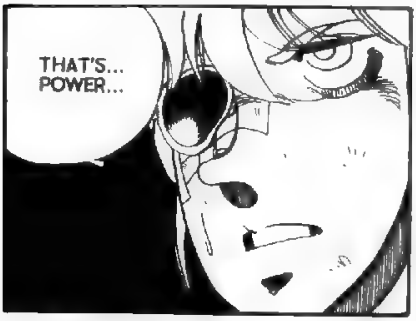
WAIT. THEY'RE NOT...
VREEEEEEEEEEEEE
...NOT TOWN 50 TROOPERS.
IT'S A WHOLE BATTALION.
THEY MUST BE ANTI-RESISTANCE TROOPS OF SOME KIND, BUT...
WHAT'S THAT?
IS THERE ANY OTHER RESISTANCE GROUP AROUND...

IT'S NAGOSHI! NAGOSHI'S FLOATING BASE!
SO, THAT'S IT... BIG, AIN'T IT?
UH-HUH.
LOOK! THEY'VE FOUND IT!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT NAGOSHI.
A BATTALION LIKE THAT WON'T EVEN FAZE IT.
THAT'S SOME FAITH...

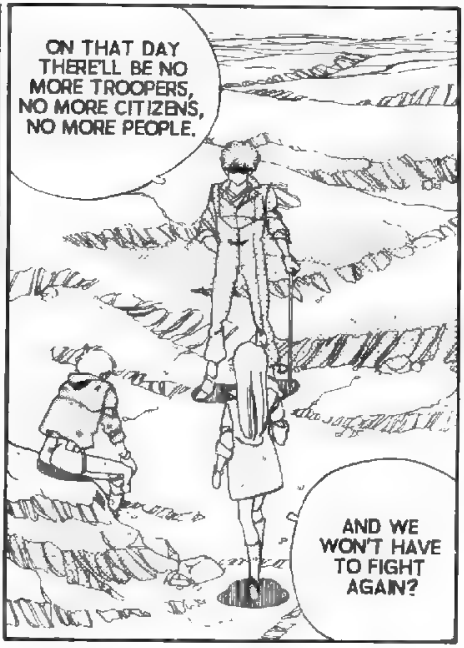
YOU WAIT AND SEE...
VEEEEEE
TINK
TINK
TINK
FAM!
A KRAG SHOT...
WM WM WM
EEYARGH!


BA BA BA WOOM!



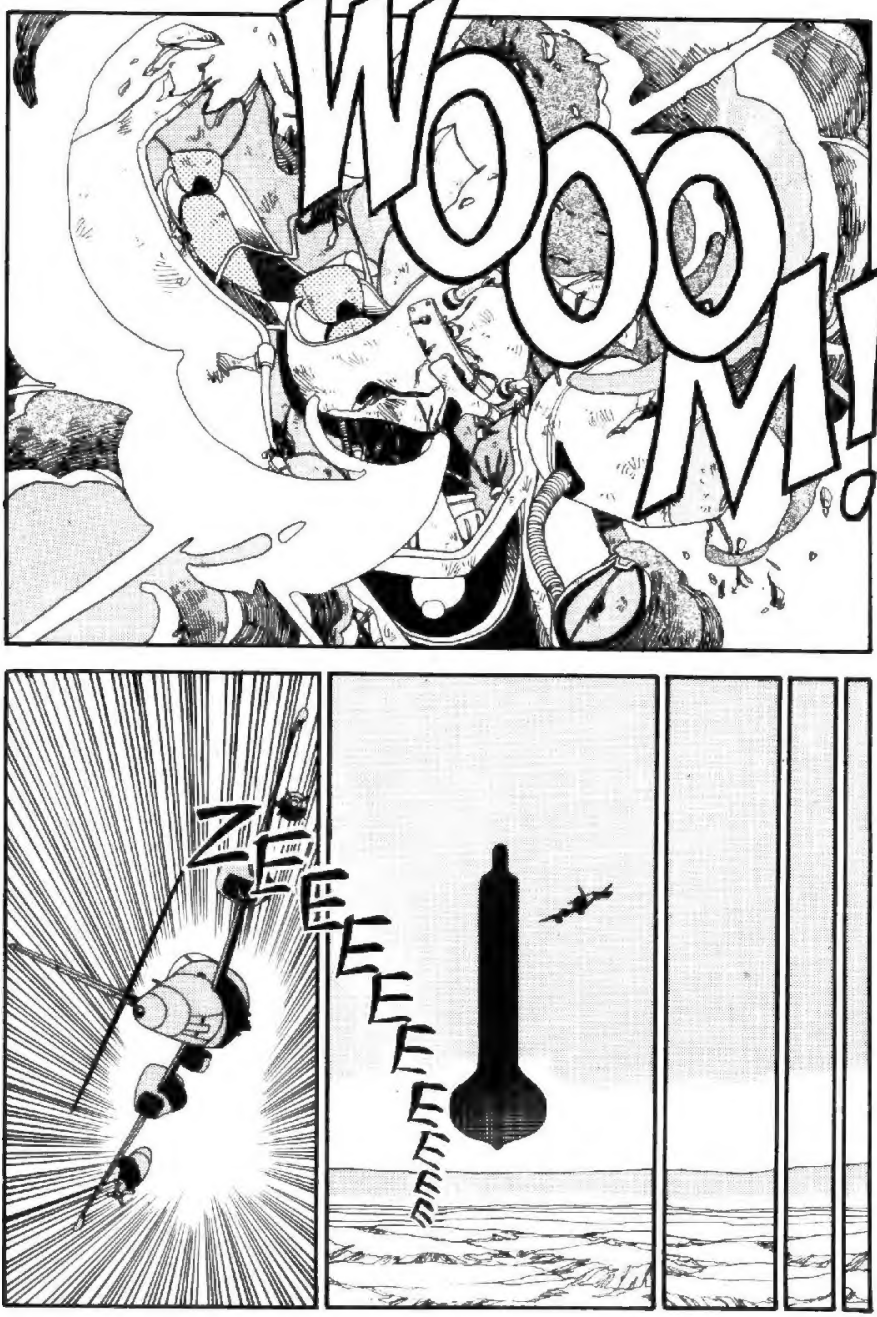

THAT'S... POWER...

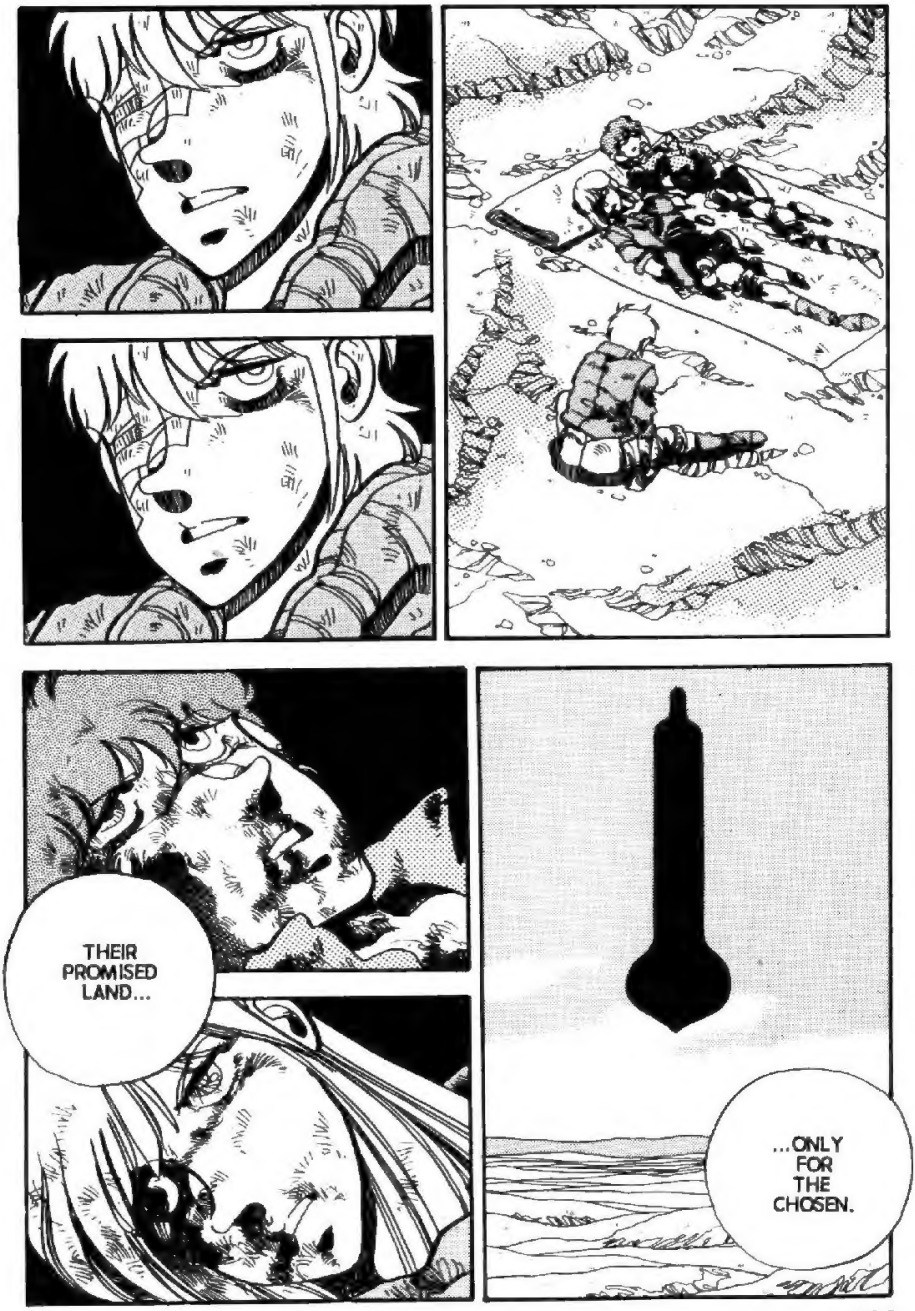
THE DAY WILL COME WHEN NAGOSHI DESTROYS BIG MAMA.

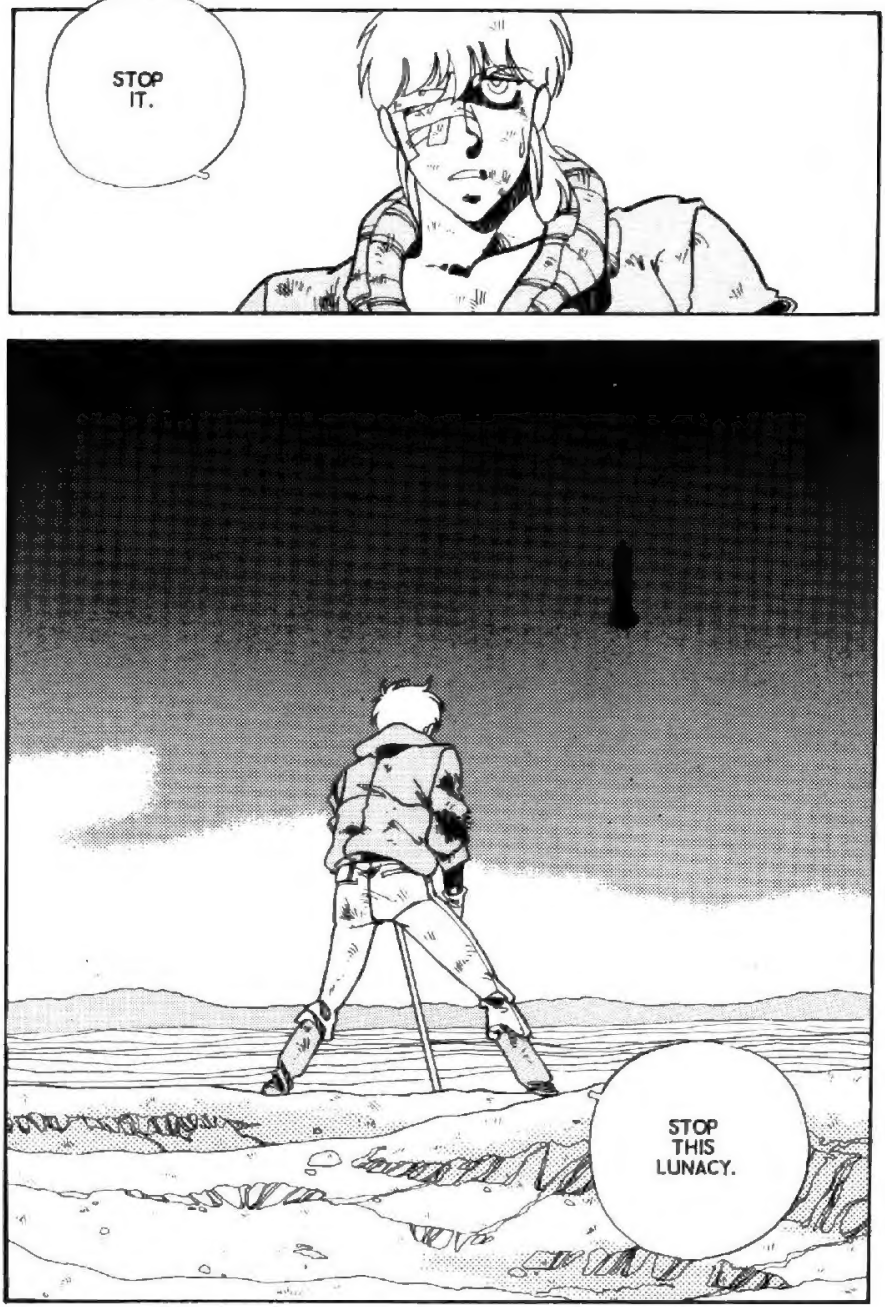

ON THAT DAY THERE'LL BE NO MORE TROOPERS, NO MORE CITIZENS, NO MORE PEOPLE.
AND WE WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT AGAIN?

NEVER AGAIN.
YOU COULD SAY THAT.
SO... IS THAT YOUR AD COPY?
AND YOU REALLY BELIEVE YOU CAN CREATE A WORLD LIKE TH--
VREEEEEEEE
THERE'S A SPECIAL SUBSTANCE IMPLANTED IN MY ARMS...
THAT'S A SCOUTING PLANE.

THE PLANES... THEIR SENSORS PICK IT UP...
EEEEEEEEEEEE
KA--


WOOOM!
ZEEEEEEEEEE


THEIR PROMISED LAND...
...ONLY FOR THE CHOSEN.



THE END–BOOK ONE